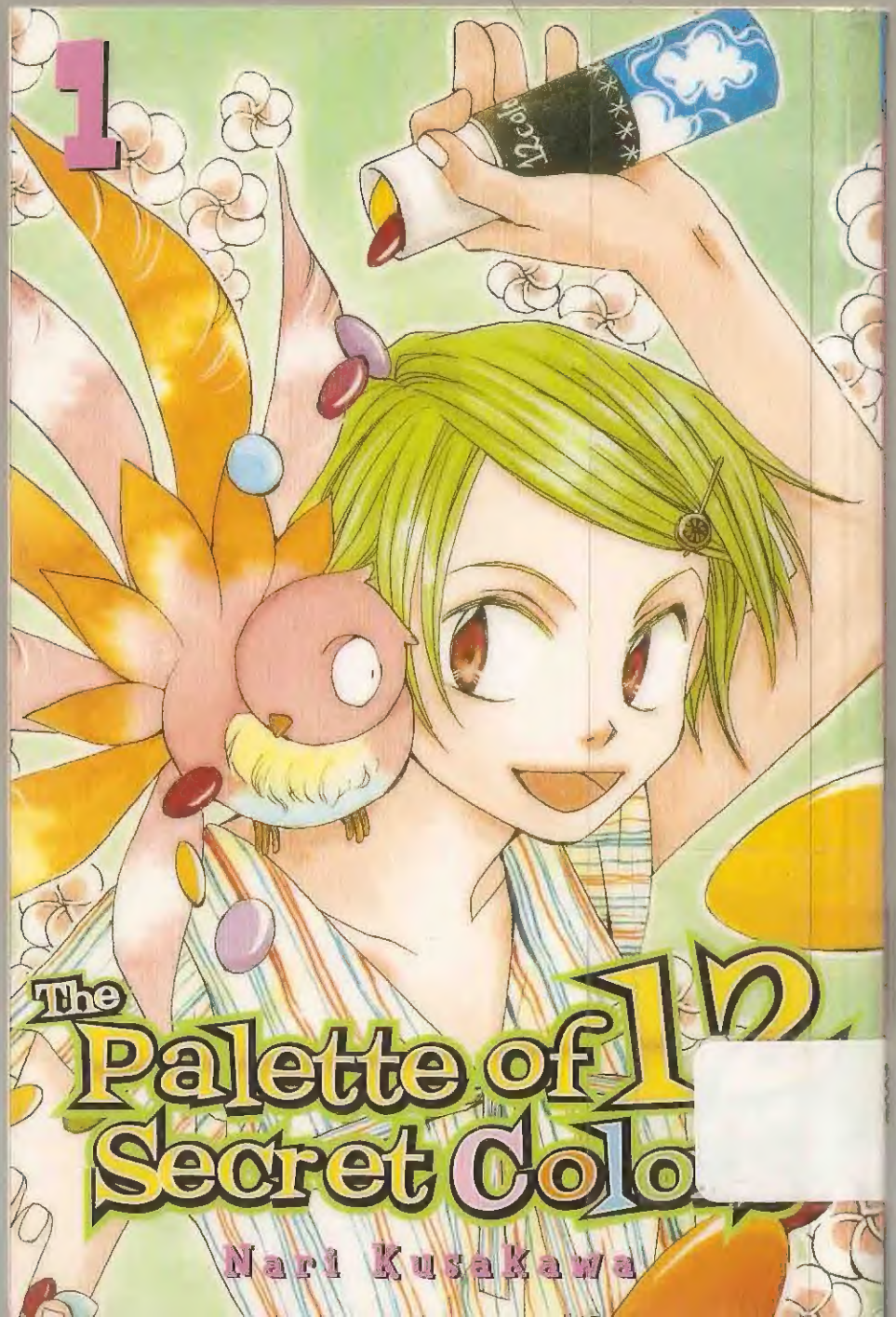
1
The Palette of 12 Secret Colo
Nari Kusakawa

A GIRL, A BIRD AND A CO[redacted] LAND OF WIZARDS AND MAGIC.

On the island of Opal live the world's most colorful birds. The birds have attracted a school for aspiring **"Palettes"** – wizards who have the ability to borrow color from one object and paint its qualities on to another. **Young Cello** has the potential to be a great Palette, but she just can't seem to control her power. As the end of freshman year approaches she's on the verge of failing, so she's going to need all the help her bird **Yoyo** can provide.

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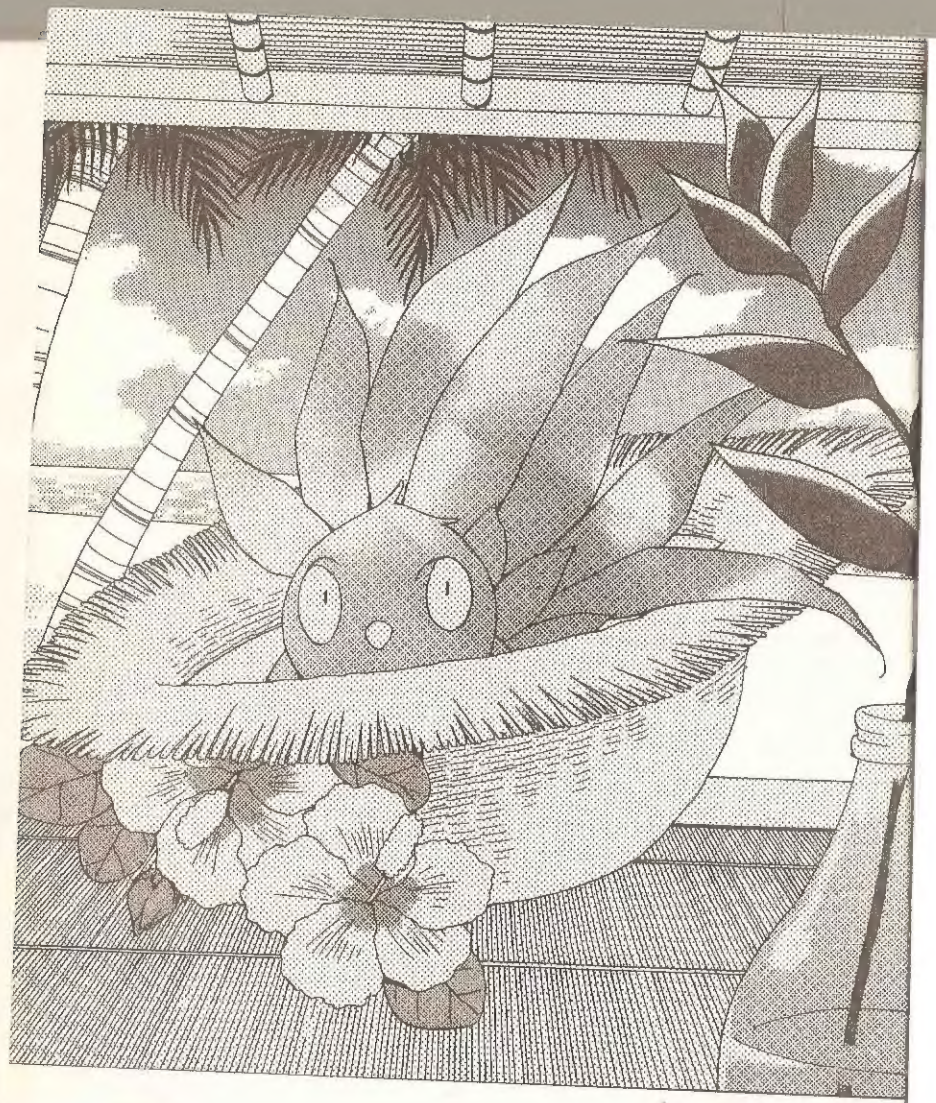

The Palette of 12 Secret Colors

Volume 1

By Nari Kusakawa

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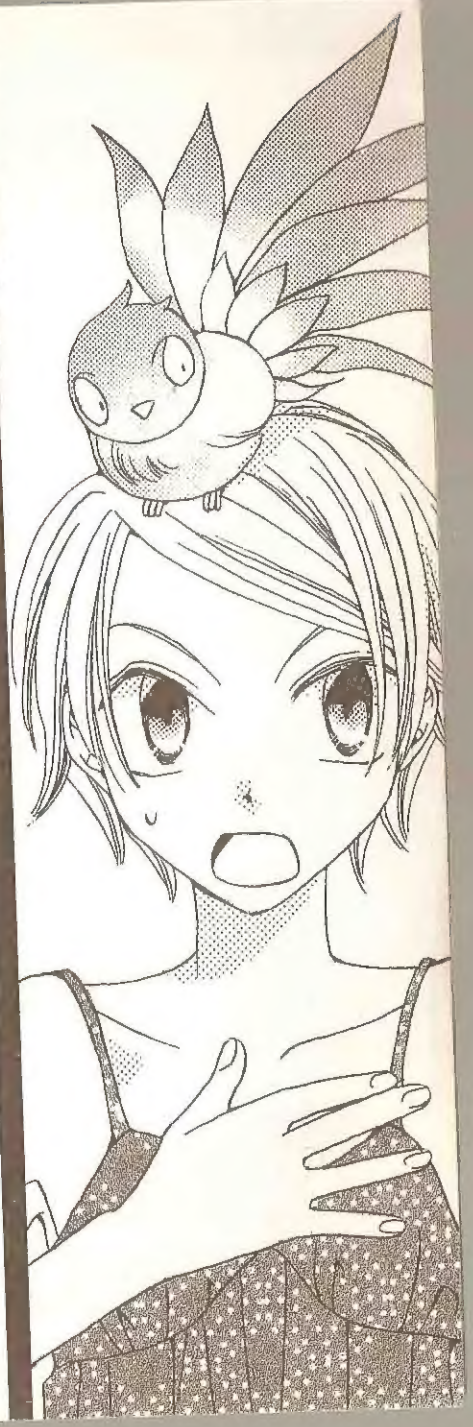
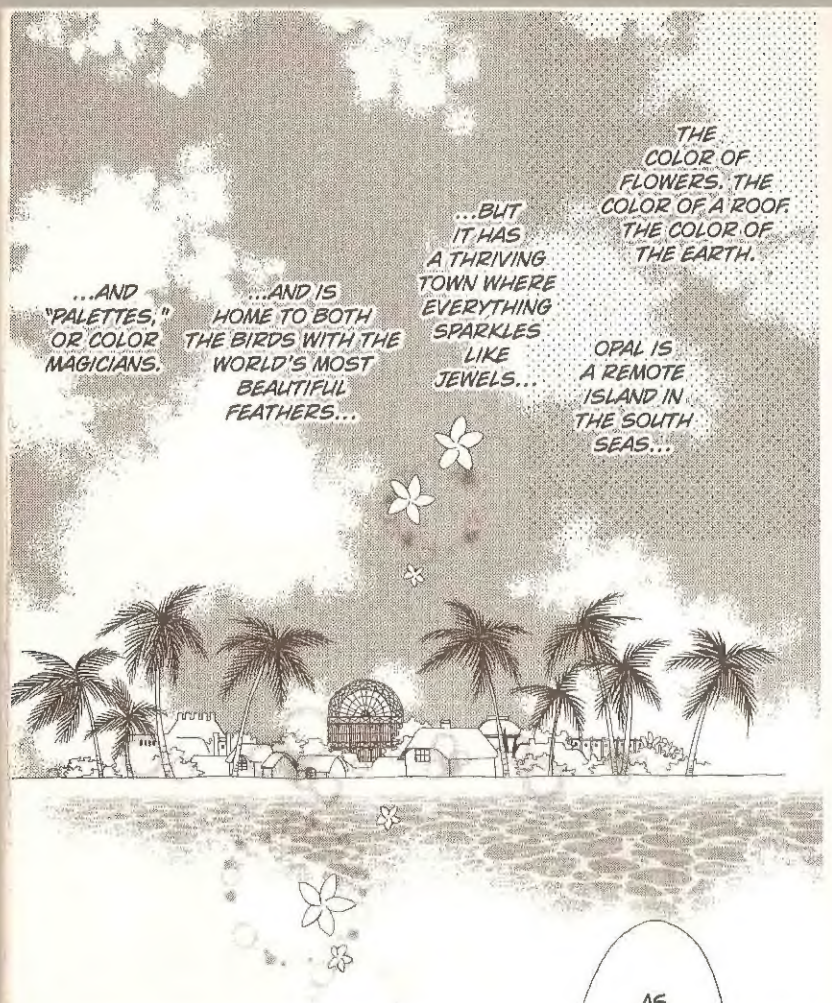


The Palette of 12 Secret Colors

十二秋色のパレット

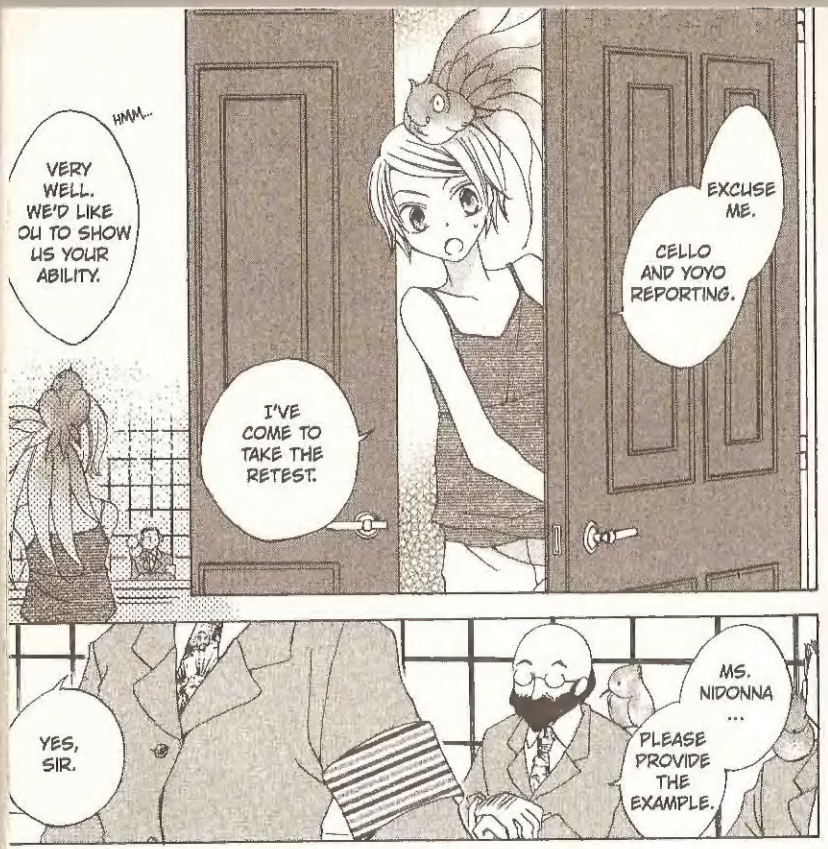
じゅうにひそく

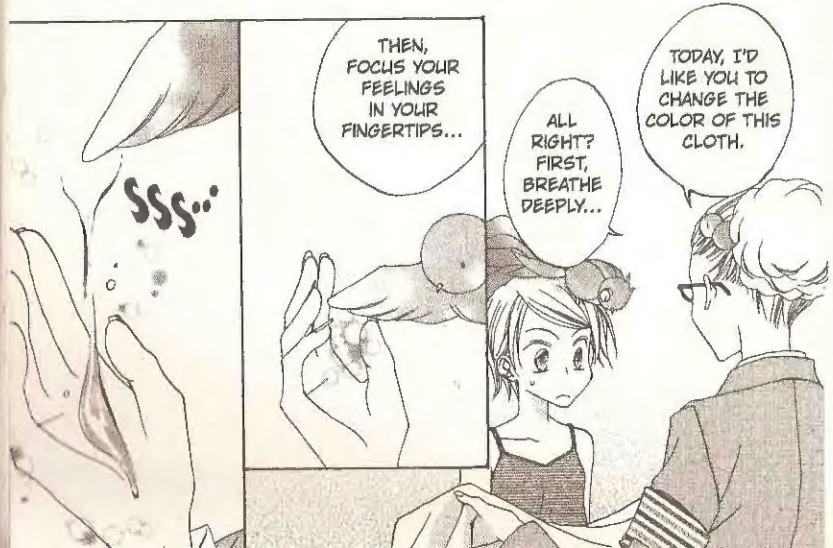
CHAPTER 1

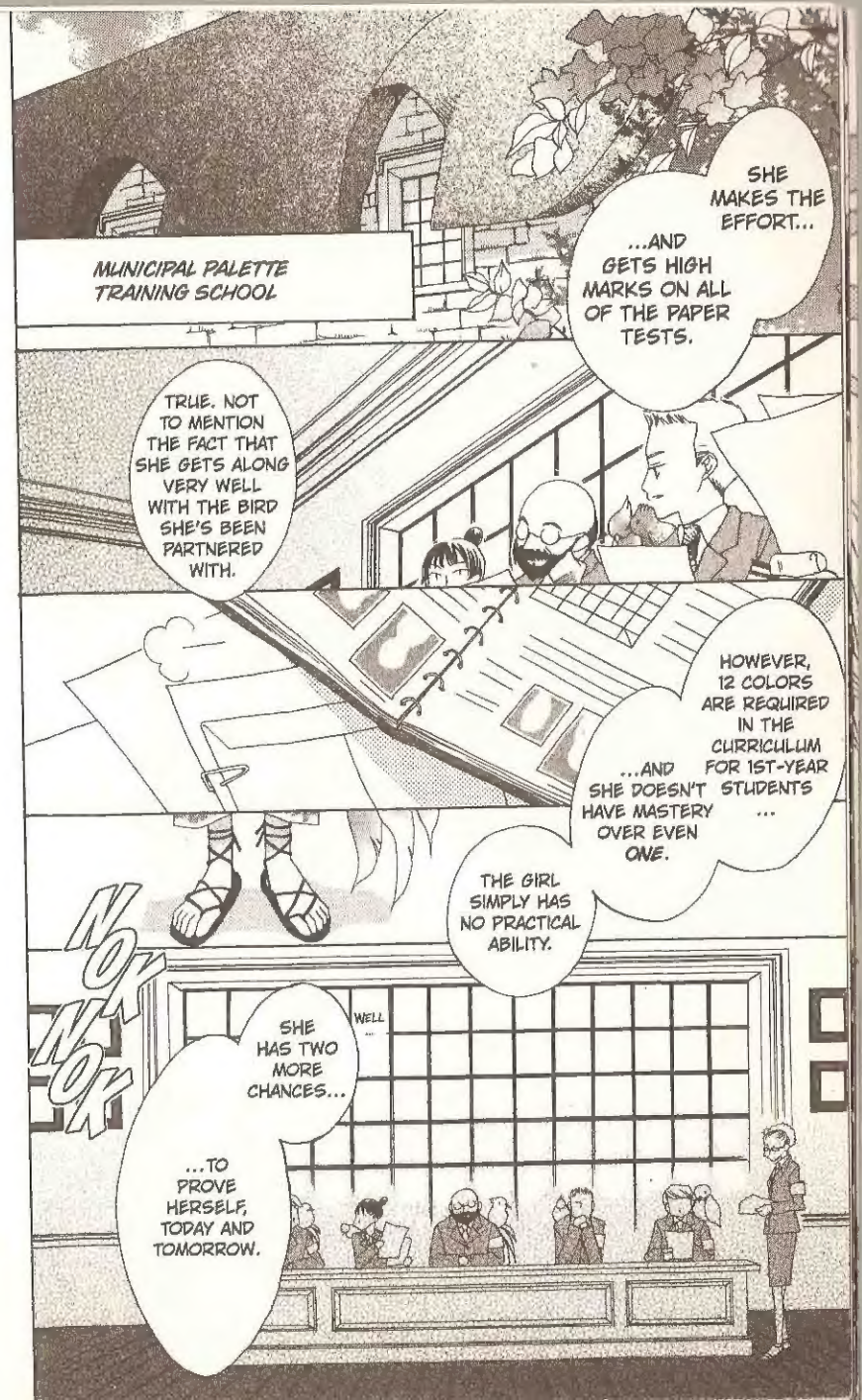

...AND "PALETTES," OR COLOR MAGICIANS.
...AND IS HOME TO BOTH THE BIRDS WITH THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL FEATHERS...
...BUT IT HAS A THRIVING TOWN WHERE EVERYTHING SPARKLES LIKE JEWELS...
THE COLOR OF FLOWERS. THE COLOR OF A ROOF. THE COLOR OF THE EARTH.
OPAL IS A REMOTE ISLAND IN THE SOUTH SEAS...

Episode 1
Preview Cut

When I drew this, I'd planned to have the students wear school uniforms, but finally decided that it didn't convey the impression I was going for. The bird didn't feel right either.
Yoyo looks too much like a King here.


EXCUSE ME.
CELLO AND YOYO REPORTING.
I'VE COME TO TAKE THE RETEST.
HMM...
VERY WELL. WE'D LIKE OU TO SHOW US YOUR ABILITY.
MS. NIDONNA ...
PLEASE PROVIDE THE EXAMPLE.
YES, SIR.


TODAY, I'D LIKE YOU TO CHANGE THE COLOR OF THIS CLOTH.
ALL RIGHT? FIRST, BREATHE DEEPLY...
THEN, FOCUS YOUR FEELINGS IN YOUR FINGERTIPS...
SSS...


MUNICIPAL PALETTE TRAINING SCHOOL
SHE MAKES THE EFFORT...
...AND GETS HIGH MARKS ON ALL OF THE PAPER TESTS.
TRUE. NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT SHE GETS ALONG VERY WELL WITH THE BIRD SHE'S BEEN PARTNERED WITH.
HOWEVER, 12 COLORS ARE REQUIRED IN THE CURRICULUM FOR 1ST-YEAR STUDENTS ...
...AND SHE DOESN'T HAVE MASTERY OVER EVEN ONE.
THE GIRL SIMPLY HAS NO PRACTICAL ABILITY.
NO, WAIT
WELL ...
SHE HAS TWO MORE CHANCES...
...TO PROVE HERSELF, TODAY AND TOMORROW.

BY BORROW-ING COLORS FROM THE VIVID PLUMAGE ...
... PALETTES CAN PAINT ORDINARY CLOTH INTO BROCADE ...
...COMMON ROCKS INTO PRECIOUS STONES.

FOOO...
FROM WHITE TO SKY BLUE...
THEY'RE PAIRED UP WITH THE TOWN'S TREASURES, BRILLIANTLY COLORED BIRDS.
PALETTES ARE SPECIAL ARTISANS WHO HAVE THE ABILITY...
...TO TAKE COLORS FROM WHAT-EVER THEY TOUCH.
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.
TRY TO TURN IT TO THE PINK COLOR OF YOUR BIRD.
OKAY.

YOU MAY RETAKE THE TEST AGAIN TOMORROW.
ALL RIGHT.
IF YOU DO NOT PASS THEN, YOU'LL HAVE TO REPEAT THE YEAR.
...ALL RIGHT.
MERCHANTS FROM FARAWAY PORTS CROSS THE SEA TO PURCHASE HIGH-PRICED PALETTE-PAINTED GOODS.
MAYBE I'M JUST NOT CUT OUT FOR ...
KICK
A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE OF THE PROCEEDS GO TO THE TOWN, THE FORMAL OWNER OF THE BIRDS.
THERE-FORE, PALETTES ARE TRAINED STRICTLY.

POP!!
OH!
WE CALL THIS TALENT "SECRET COLORS"...
FAIL!
PINK...
NOT GOOD...

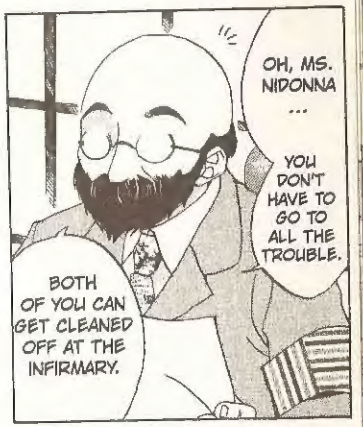
SLAM
EXCUSE ME.
UH, MS. NIDONNA ...
THE INFIRMARY IS THIS WAY ...
I HAVE TO PREPARE FOR CLASS.

THE INFIRMARY
... DR. GUELL.
BOW
... LIKE A PINK PAINT BOMB WENT OFF. SO PLEASE HELP ME ...

AH!
THANK YOU...
EVEN IF THEY WASH IT, IT WON'T COME OFF.
I'LL DO IT FOR YOU.
FIRST OF ALL, CELLO, LET'S GET OUR OWN COLORS BACK TO NORMAL.
OK?

SO, OFF WITH BOTH OF YOU.
AT THE MOMENT, DR. GUELL HAS PLENTY OF TIME ON HIS HANDS.

MM...
YES, I'M WELL AWARE OF YOUR COMPETENCE ...
...BUT ALL THE SAME, WE DO HAVE A DOCTOR FOR THAT VERY PURPOSE.

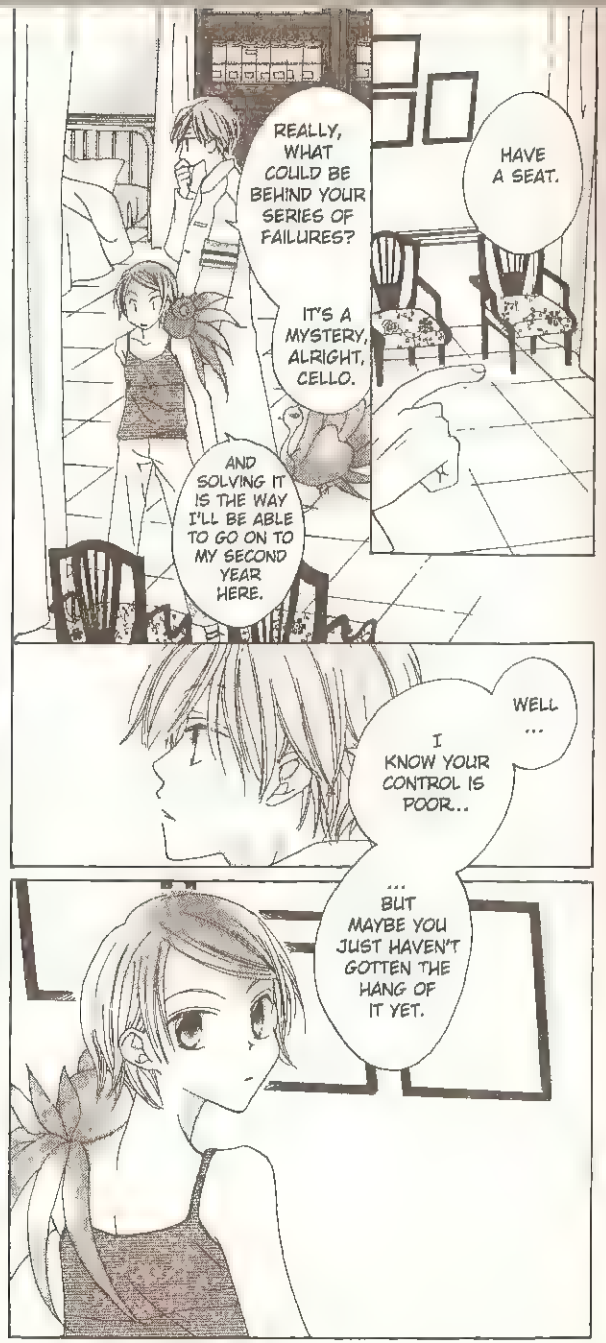

OH, MS. NIDONNA ...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE.
BOTH OF YOU CAN GET CLEANED OFF AT THE INFIRMARY.

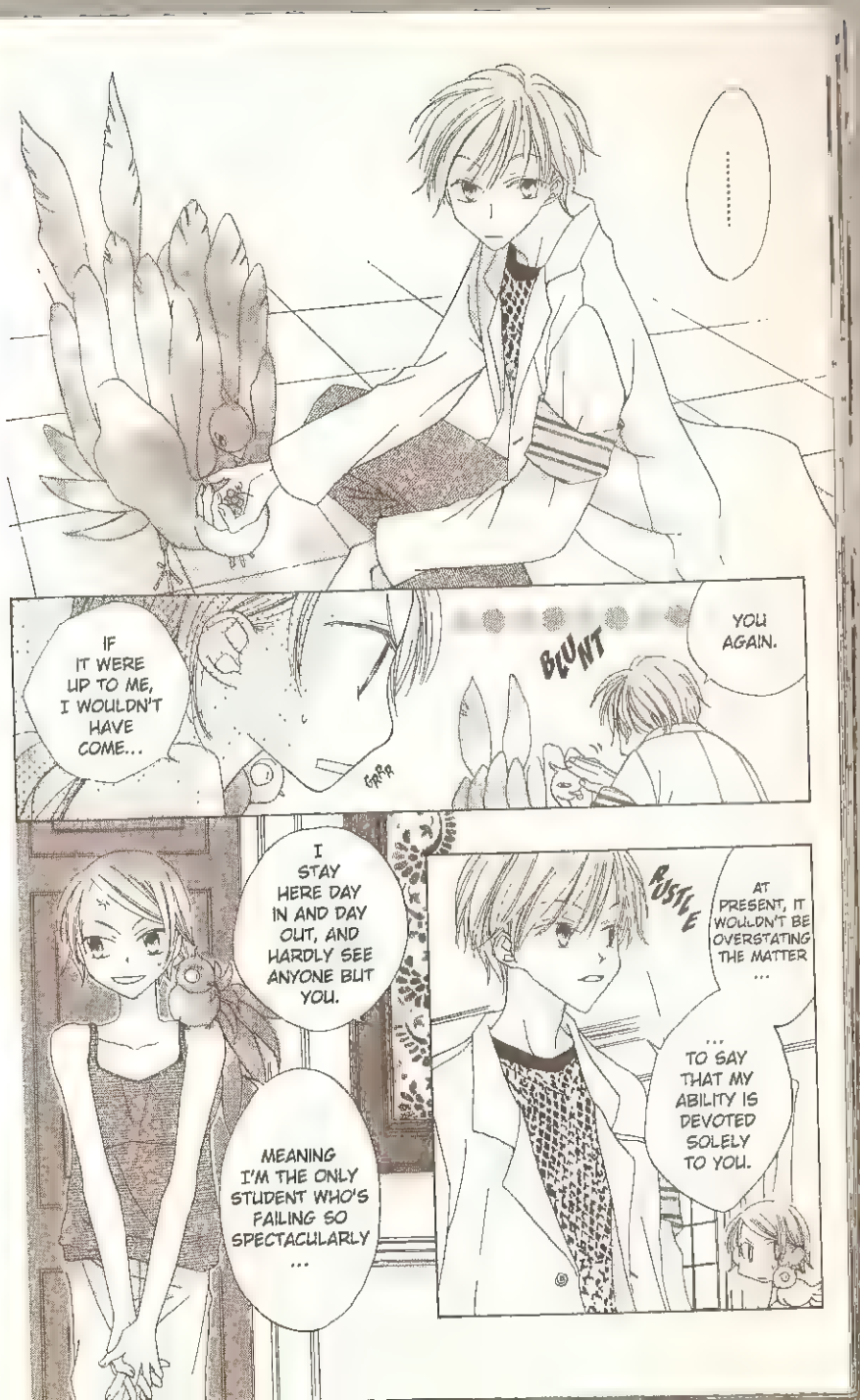
LET'S LEAVE HUMAN COLOR TREATMENT TO A PROFESSIONAL.
BUT I CAN HANDLE IT JUST AS WELL, SIR.

1

NICE TO MEET YOU. TO MY NEW READERS, HELLO! TO MY RETURNING ONES AND TO ALL OF YOU, THANK YOU FOR GETTING THIS VOLUME. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, BUT I PUT IN A LOT OF BONUS PAGES AT THE END OF THE BOOK, SO IF YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME FROM FIRST PAGE TO LAST, I'LL BE REALLY HAPPY.

AROUND DECEMBER OF 2003, MY LEFT EYELID SUDDENLY DEVELOPED A "DOUBLE FOLD" AND IT STILL HASN'T RETURNED TO NORMAL. ALL I HAVE TO REPORT IS THAT I'VE GROWN SO USED TO IT THAT IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR NOW. EVERYONE AROUND ME TELLS ME THAT IF IT DOES SEEM TO BE PERMANENT, I MIGHT AS WELL GET A LITTLE COSMETIC SURGERY DONE ON MY RIGHT EYELID TO GET A MATCHING DOUBLE FOLD AND VOILA, A "NEW" NARI WOULD BE BORN OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...BUT GOING THROUGH SURGERY WOULD BE A PAIN IN THE BUTT, SO I DOUBT I WILL HAVE IT DONE.


HAVE A SEAT.
REALLY, WHAT COULD BE BEHIND YOUR SERIES OF FAILURES?
IT'S A MYSTERY, ALRIGHT, CELLO.
AND SOLVING IT IS THE WAY I'LL BE ABLE TO GO ON TO MY SECOND YEAR HERE.
WELL ...
I KNOW YOUR CONTROL IS POOR...
... BUT MAYBE YOU JUST HAVEN'T GOTTEN THE HANG OF IT YET.

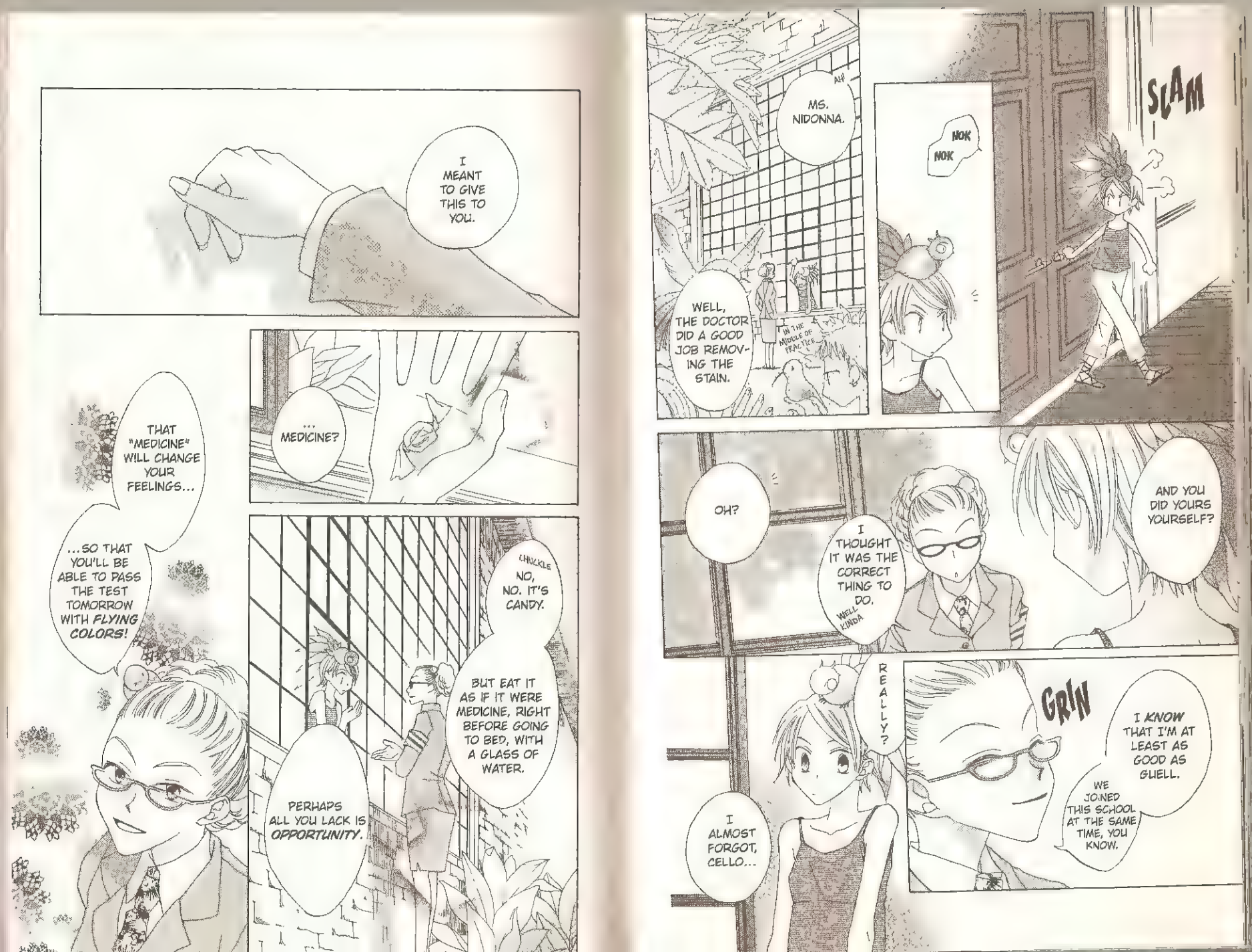

.....
IF IT WERE UP TO ME, I WOULDN'T HAVE COME...
BLUNT
YOU AGAIN.
I STAY HERE DAY IN AND DAY OUT, AND HARDLY SEE ANYONE BUT YOU.
MEANING I'M THE ONLY STUDENT WHO'S FAILING SO SPECTACULARLY ...
RUSTLE
AT PRESENT, IT WOULDN'T BE OVERSTATING THE MATTER ...
... TO SAY THAT MY ABILITY IS DEVOTED SOLELY TO YOU.

LET'S PUT THIS ...

I SUSPECT I DON'T HAVE ANY TALENT AT ALL ...
KICK
OKAY.
DON'T MOVE.

...AND SET YOUR FEELING.
FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU'RE GOING TO PAINT A CLOTH, YOU SHOULD CONJURE UP MEMORIES OF THE CLOTH'S TEXTURE...
IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW YOU INTEND TO EMPLOY THE COLORS OF THE PLUMAGE.
I WOULD NEVER MAKE A MISTAKE ...
... WITH YOUR HAIR.
WELL, THANKS FOR THE HELP!
BLUNT
I SEE IT SO MUCH I'M SICK OF IT ALREADY.

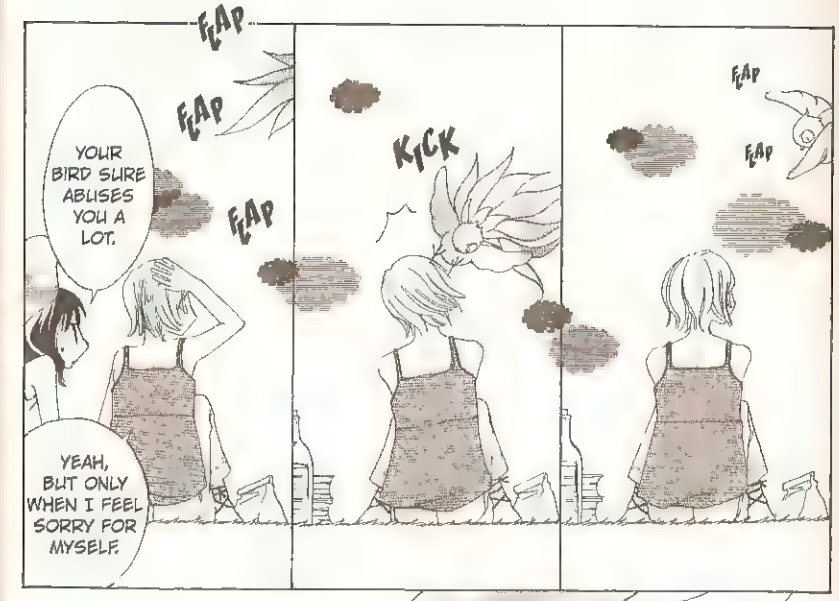
DOCTOR, DON'T YOU EVER MIX UP THE COLORS, I MEAN, WHAT YOU REMOVE AND THE ORIGINAL SKIN OR HAIR COLOR?
... AND WE'RE DONE.
... BACK WHERE IT BELONGS ...
IF YOU HAVE A STRONG MEMORY ...A STRONG IMAGINATION ...
... AND CAN FIX THE IMAGE CLEARLY IN YOUR MIND, IT'S NO PROBLEM.
MY HAIR IS BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL COLOR ...


I MEANT TO GIVE THIS TO YOU.
... MEDICINE?
THAT "MEDICINE" WILL CHANGE YOUR FEELINGS...
...SO THAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO PASS THE TEST TOMORROW WITH *FLYING COLORS*!
CHUCKLE NO, NO. IT'S CANDY.
BUT EAT IT AS IF IT WERE MEDICINE, RIGHT BEFORE GOING TO BED, WITH A GLASS OF WATER.
PERHAPS ALL YOU LACK IS *OPPORTUNITY*.
AH! MS. NIDONNA.
WELL, THE DOCTOR DID A GOOD JOB REMOV-ING THE STAIN.
IN THE MIDDLE OF PRACTICE
NOK NOK
SLAM
OH?
I THOUGHT IT WAS THE CORRECT THING TO DO. WELL, KINDA.
AND YOU DID YOURS YOURSELF?
REALLY?
I ALMOST FORGOT, CELLO...
GRIN
I *KNOW* THAT I'M AT LEAST AS GOOD AS GUELL.
WE JOINED THIS SCHOOL AT THE SAME TIME, YOU KNOW.

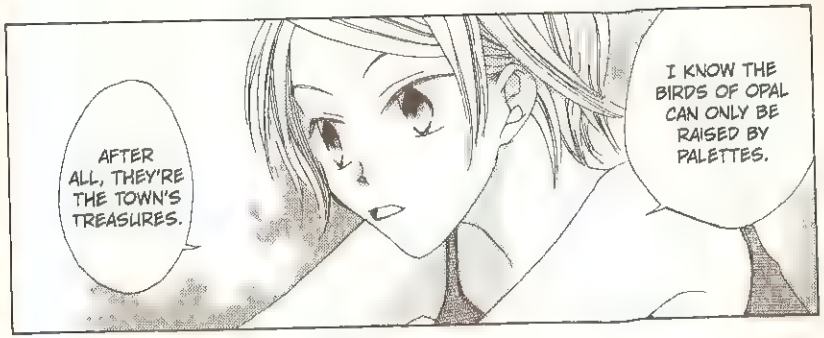
2

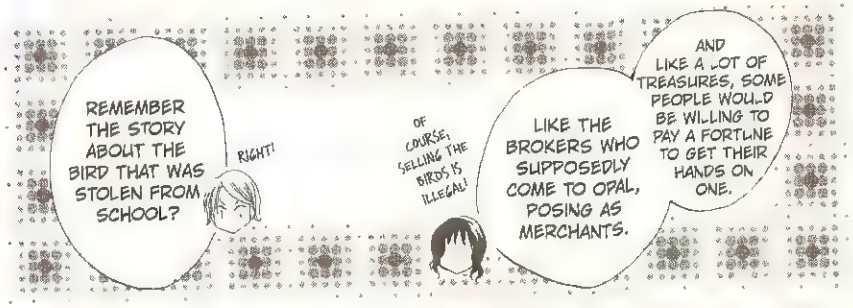
SPEAKING OF THE SEA... THIS STORY IS SET ON AN ISLAND IN THE SOUTH SEAS, BUT ACTUALLY, THE CLOSEST THING I KNOW TO THAT KIND OF PLACE IS A BATHING BEACH IN MY OWN AREA IN AICHI PREFECTURE. (IN JAPAN.) WHEN I WAS AROUND 20 YEARS OLD, I WORE A TWO-PIECE BATHING SUIT TO THE BEACH (THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS THAT I'D GONE) AND NEGLECTED TO PUT ON SUNSCREEN. WELL, AFTER SPENDING THE WHOLE DAY HAVING FUN IN THE SUN, I GOT A BAD BURN AND NOTICED SOMETIME AFTER THAT THAT THE NUMBER OF MOLES ON MY STOMACH WAS INCREASING. NOW I REALIZE THAT THE PARTS OF MY BODY THAT AREN'T USUALLY EXPOSED TO THE SUN ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE. I HOPE ALL OF YOU OUT THERE ARE MORE CAREFUL THAN I WAS. ACTUALLY, AT THAT AGE I DIDN'T TAKE THE UV THREAT SERIOUSLY, BUT NOW I'M A LITTLE WORRIED BECAUSE I GOT SUCH A BAD BURN THEN THAT THE SKIN ON MY FACE PEELED OFF.

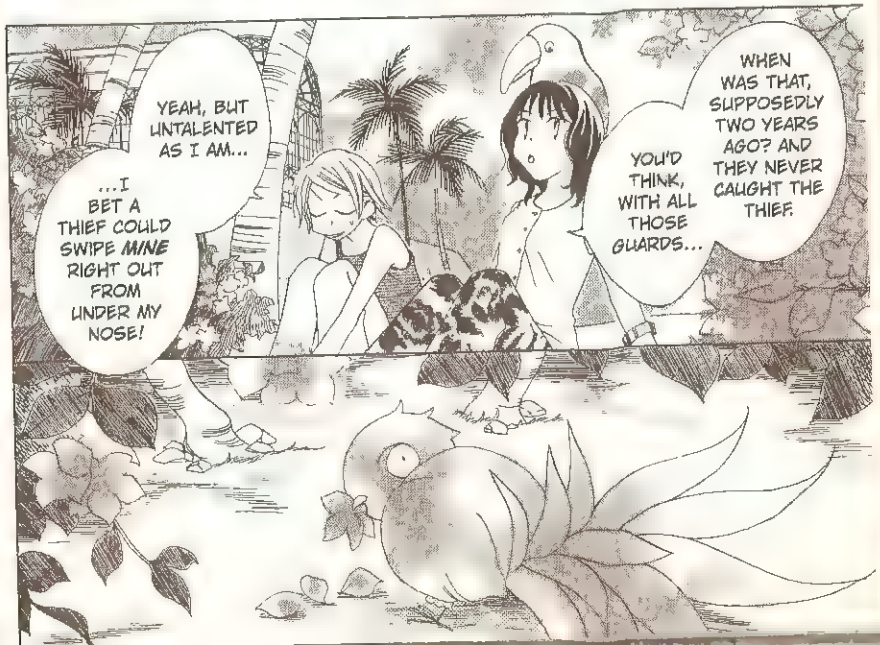
ALTHOUGH I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THIS JUST ISN'T MEANT FOR ME...
PROMISE TO BE MY FRIEND, EVEN IF YOU DO HAVE TO REPEAT THE YEAR.
I PROMISE.
...KEEP YOUR CHIN UP!
OK.
THANK YOU.
MUNCH
MUNCH
STUDENTS WHO DON'T BECOME PALETTES...
AND YOU WOULDN'T WANT THAT, WOULD YOU?
...HAVE TO RETURN THEIR BIRD TO THE SCHOOL.
OF COURSE NOT!


FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
YOUR BIRD SURE ABUSES YOU A LOT.
YEAH, BUT ONLY WHEN I FEEL SORRY FOR MYSELF.
KICK
FLAP
FLAP

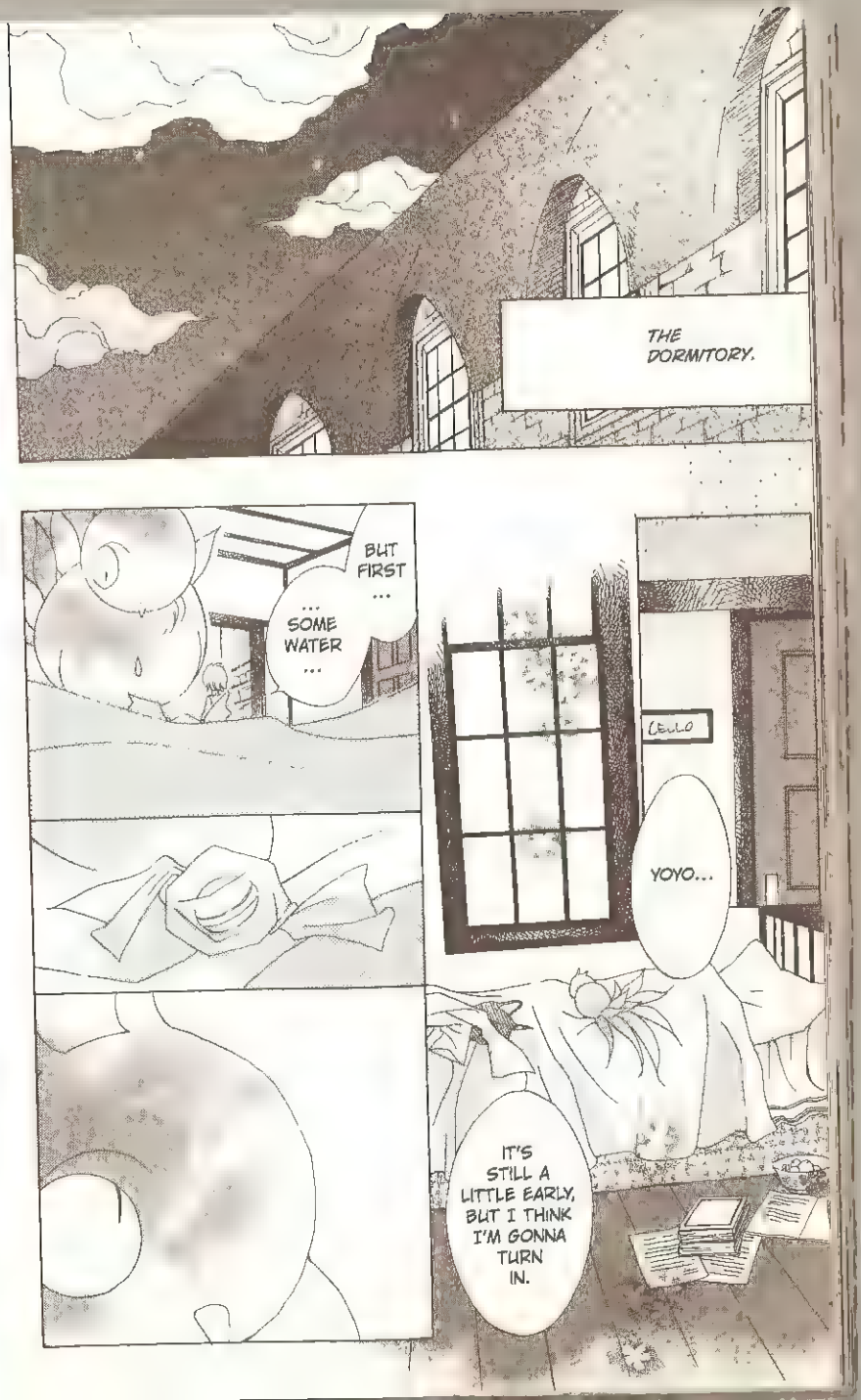
YER.
I SEE...

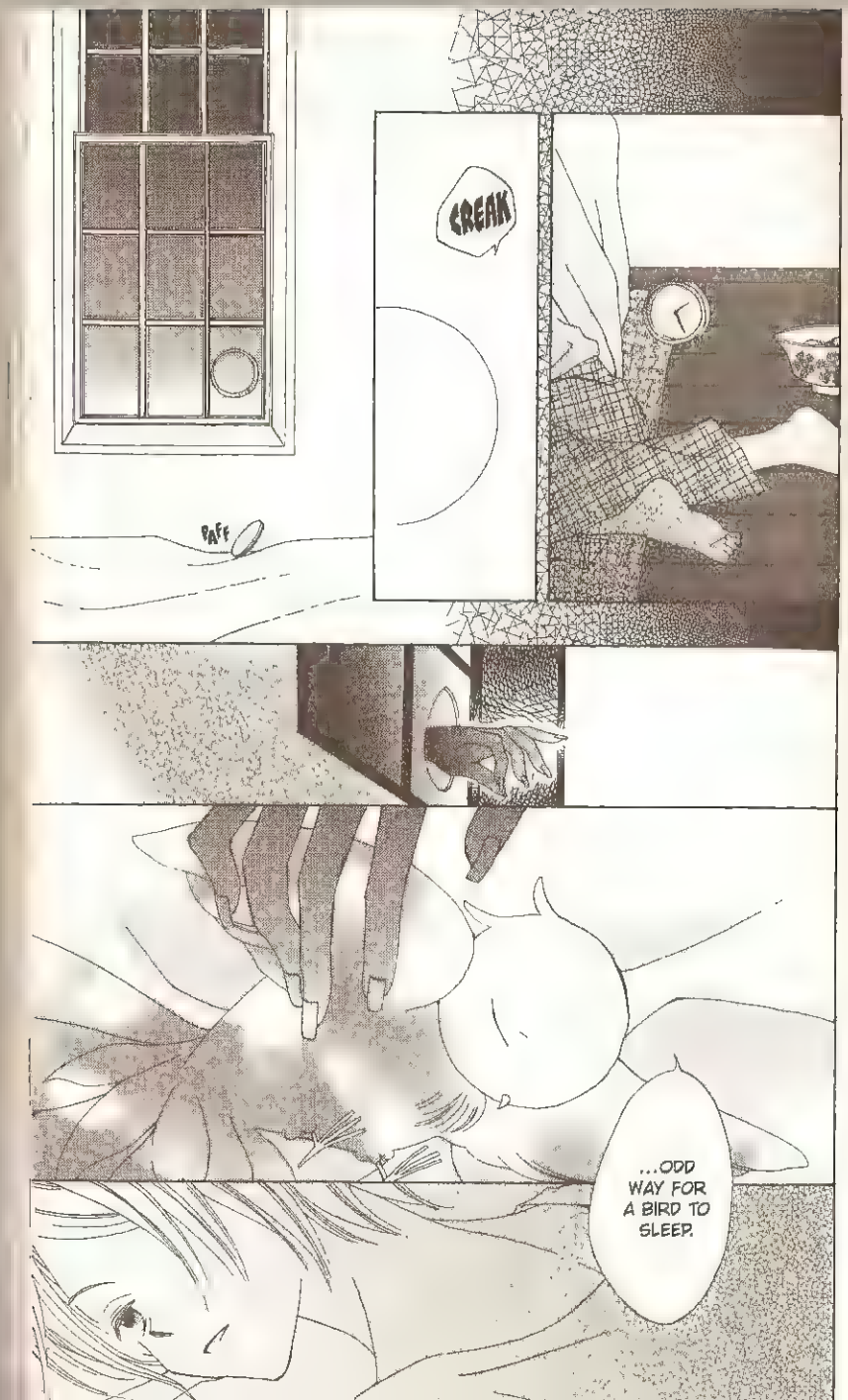

AFTER ALL, THEY'RE THE TOWN'S TREASURES.
I KNOW THE BIRDS OF OPAL CAN ONLY BE RAISED BY PALETTES.


REMEMBER THE STORY ABOUT THE BIRD THAT WAS STOLEN FROM SCHOOL?
RIGHT!
OF COURSE, SELLING THE BIRDS IS ILLEGAL!
LIKE THE BROKERS WHO SUPPOSEDLY COME TO OPAL, POSING AS MERCHANTS.
AND LIKE A LOT OF TREASURES, SOME PEOPLE WOULD BE WILLING TO PAY A FORTUNE TO GET THEIR HANDS ON ONE.


YEAH, BUT UNTALENTED AS I AM...
...I BET A THIEF COULD SWIPE *MINE* RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER MY NOSE!
YOU'D THINK, WITH ALL THOSE GUARDS...
WHEN WAS THAT, SUPPOSEDLY TWO YEARS AGO? AND THEY NEVER CAUGHT THE THIEF.

AFTER ALL, I REALLY WANNA PASS THE TEST TOMORROW!
SHAKE
SHAKE
HEY!
YOU'RE EATING MY CANDY!!
WHAT, YOU'RE SAYING YOU'RE NOT EATING IT?
I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR BEAK!
POP
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?
.....
GIVE ME THE REST!
-GULP-


THE DORMITORY.
BUT FIRST ...
... SOME WATER ...
LEULO
YOYO...
IT'S STILL A LITTLE EARLY, BUT I THINK I'M GONNA TURN IN.

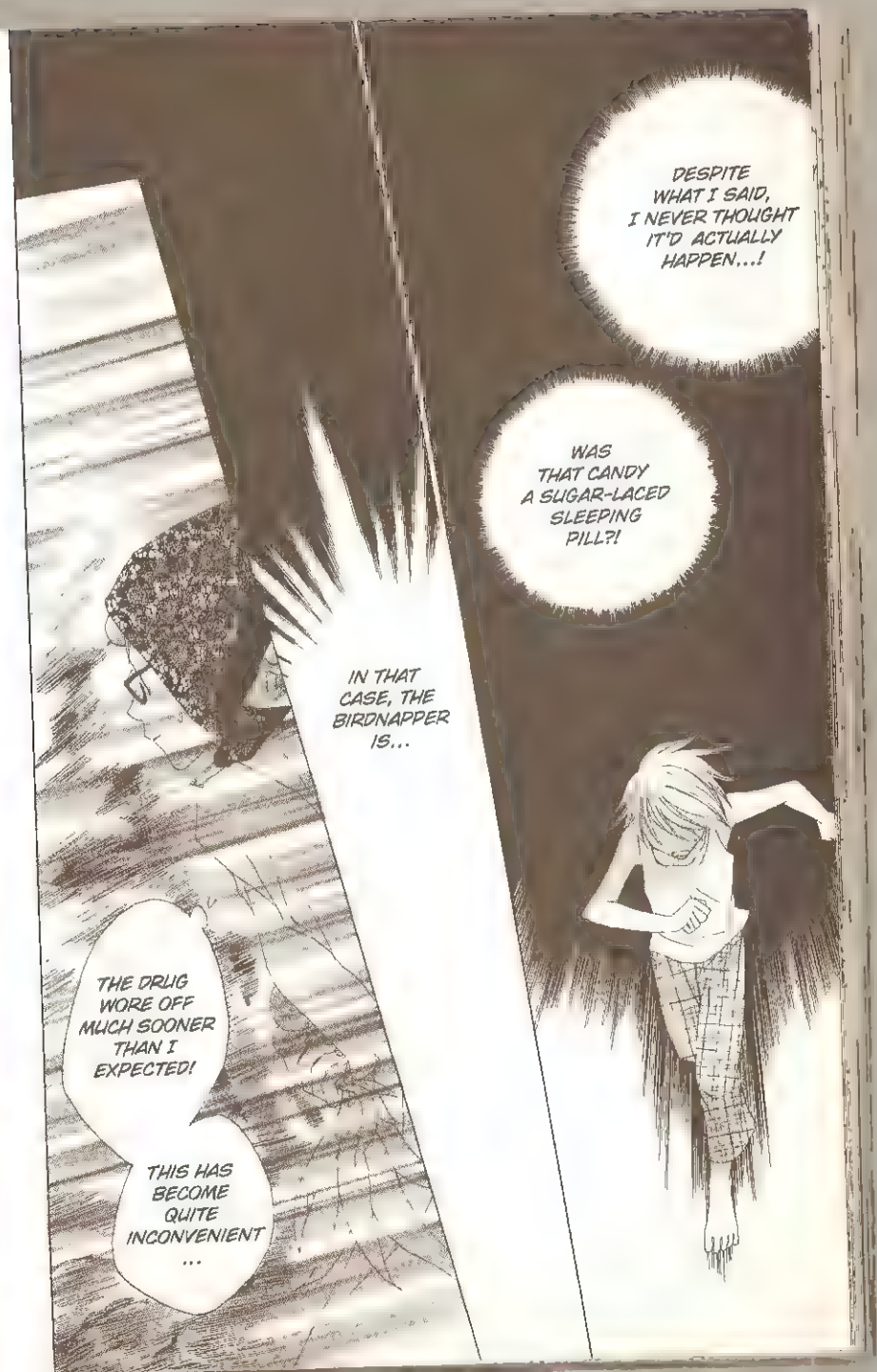

CREAK
PAFF
...ODD WAY FOR A BIRD TO SLEEP.

NOD NOD
...YOU WERE TRYING TO SAY "THAT'S NOT CANDY"?
MM?
FWAP
ZZZZZ...

WAIT...
RATTLE
BANG
RATTLE
WAIT!!
CELLO?! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
MOUSSELINE, CALL SECURITY!
YOYO'S BEEN KIDNAPPED!
EH?!

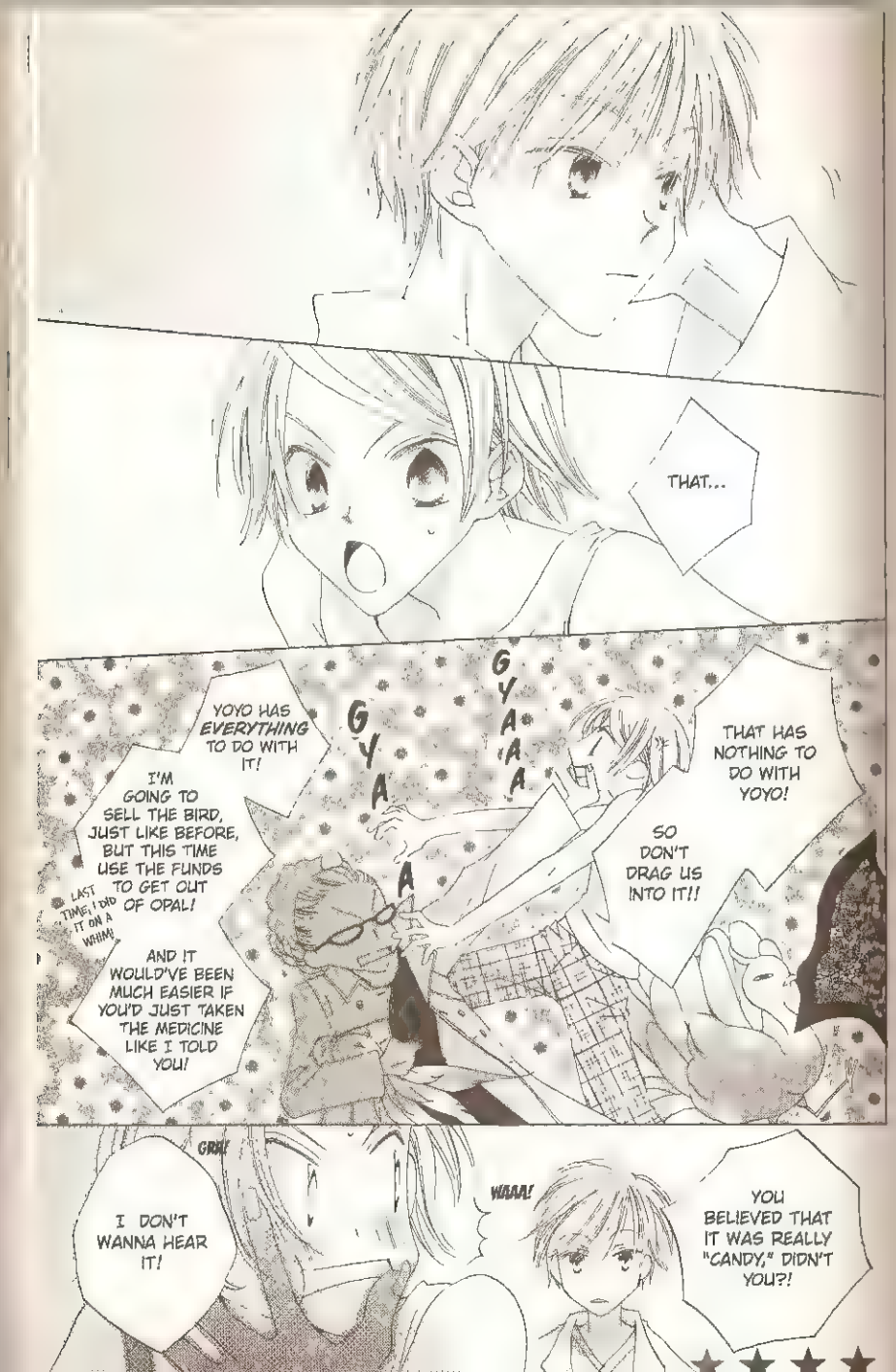
?!
SWISH
RUFFLE
RATTLE
EH?!
YOYO?!

YOYO!
SWISH
I'D EXPECTED TO MAKE A SILENT GETAWAY BUT...
AH!
DR. GUELL!


DESPITE WHAT I SAID, I NEVER THOUGHT IT'D ACTUALLY HAPPEN...!
WAS THAT CANDY A SUGAR-LACED SLEEPING PILL?!
IN THAT CASE, THE BIRDNAPPER IS...
THE DRUG WORE OFF MUCH SOONER THAN I EXPECTED!
THIS HAS BECOME QUITE INCONVENIENT ...

"WHEN WAS THAT, SUPPOSEDLY TWO YEARS AGO?"
"AND THEY NEVER CAUGHT THE THIEF."
AH!
TWO YEARS AGO, SHE PULLED THE SAME CRIME ...
... MAYBE.
HOW DID YOU ...?
...AND I DIDN'T HAVE ANY REAL PROOF, SO AFTER A WHILE, I BEGAN TO THINK MAYBE SHE WASN'T THE CULPRIT.
NOBODY ELSE SUSPECTED HER...
I TRIED TO FOLLOW, BUT SHE LOST ME.
THE NIGHT IT HAPPENED THEN, I WAS ALSO OUT FOR A WALK AND SAW NIDONNA RUNNING IN THE DISTANCE.
... SUSPECT ME THIS TIME?
THEN WHY DO YOU...

FWISH
YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO BE HIDING YOYO, WOULD YOU?!
MY BIRD'S BEEN STOLEN!
WHAT ARE YOU..
WHAT ...?
TAKING A WALK.
NIDONNA?
I DIDN'T CATCH THE THIEF'S FACE...
...BUT THIS EVENING, I WAS GIVEN "CANDY" ...
... REALLY, A SLEEPING PILL... BY, UH ...


THAT...
YOYO HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH IT!
I'M GOING TO SELL THE BIRD, JUST LIKE BEFORE, BUT THIS TIME USE THE FUNDS TO GET OUT OF OPAL!
LAST TIME, I DID IT ON A WHIM!
AND IT WOULD'VE BEEN MUCH EASIER IF YOU'D JUST TAKEN THE MEDICINE LIKE I TOLD YOU!
GYAA
GYAAA
THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOYO!
SO DON'T DRAG US INTO IT!!
GRR!
I DON'T WANNA HEAR IT!
WAAA!
YOU BELIEVED THAT IT WAS REALLY "CANDY," DIDN'T YOU?!

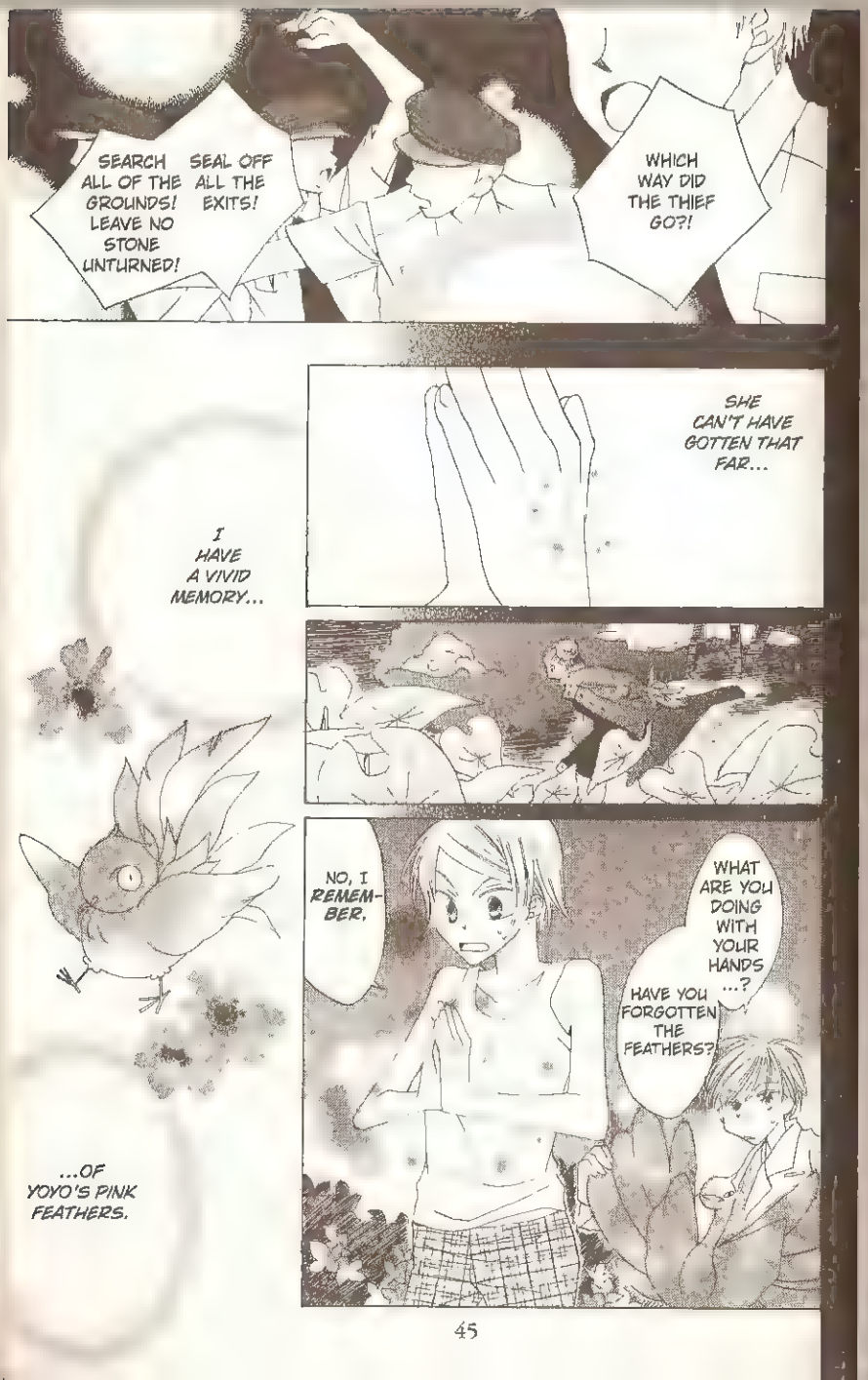
YOU COULDN'T EVEN CATCH ME THE LAST TIME!
PROVING THAT YOU ARE INFERIOR TO ME!
AND I'LL RUB IT IN BY GETTING AWAY AGAIN SCOT-FREE TONIGHT!
KYAAA!
YAAA!
RUSTLE
AH!
MS. NIDONNA ...
THAT'S NOT AMUSING ...
AT SCHOOL, YOU GET ALL THE ADMIRATION ...IT ISN'T FAIR!
UNDER COVER OF "NIGHT", AS IT WERE.
YOU'RE CLOAKED IN BLACK!
ONE WAY I DO IT'S MY SECRET COLOR.

TWO YEARS AGO TO THE DAY, I STOLE ANOTHER BIRD...
...FROM A STUDENT...
...UNDER THE SAME CONDITIONS.
SAME CONDI-TIONS?
YOU'VE ALREADY SPOILED ENOUGH OF MY PLAN, CELLO.
I WANTED TO MAKE A CLEAN BREAK WITH THE BIRD, LEAVING ONLY THE OBVIOUS ANSWER THAT "I DID IT" BEHIND.
YES. FROM THE MOST IN-COMPETENT STUDENT IN SCHOOL.
COULDN'T DO A THING.

CELLO...
...GET AWAY FROM NIDONNA!
CRASH
FWAP
!!
HUH?
IT'S ALRIGHT, SHE JUST "SPRAY-PAINTED" YOUR EYES...I CAN FIX THEM.
I CAN'T SEE!
DON'T HINDER ME FURTHER.

"COULDN'T DO A THING."

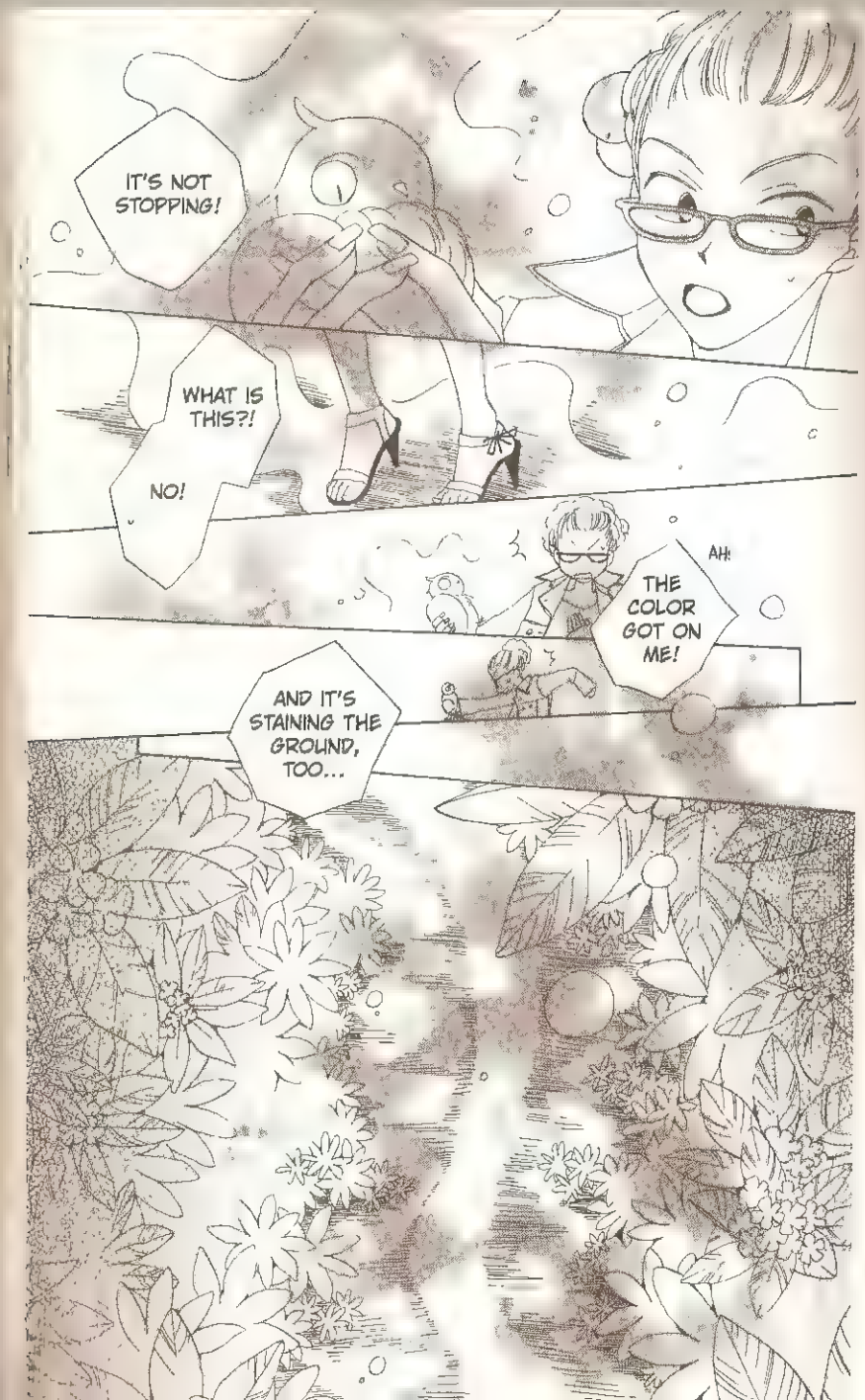
THAT'S WHY SHE TARGETED ME?
SSS
YOU JUST DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.
MY ADVICE IS TO QUIT, THE SOONER, THE BETTER.
"THE MOST INCOMPETENT STUDENT IN SCHOOL."
LET'S GET YOU TAKEN CARE OF.
SECURITY IS HERE ALREADY.
MAYBE THEY CAN TRACK HER DOWN.


SEARCH ALL OF THE GROUNDS! LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED!
SEAL OFF ALL THE EXITS!
WHICH WAY DID THE THIEF GO?!
SHE CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN THAT FAR...
I HAVE A VIVID MEMORY...
NO, I REMEMBER.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR HANDS ...?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE FEATHERS?
...OF YOYO'S PINK FEATHERS.

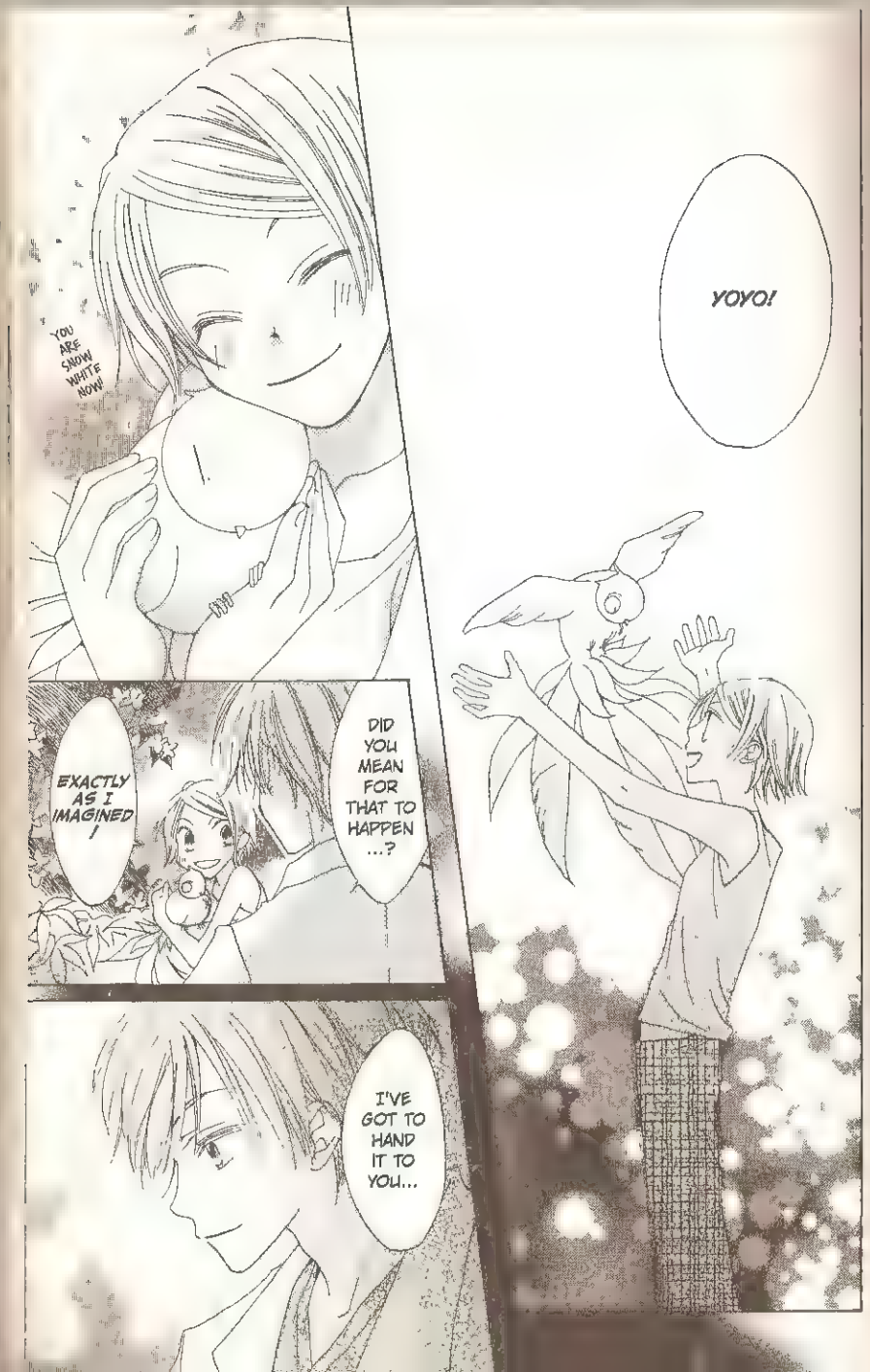
I'LL TEACH YOU TO UNDERESTIMATE ME...
SQUEEZE
...YOU WITCH!
"PERHAPS ALL YOU LACK IS OPPORTUNITY."
...CELLO?

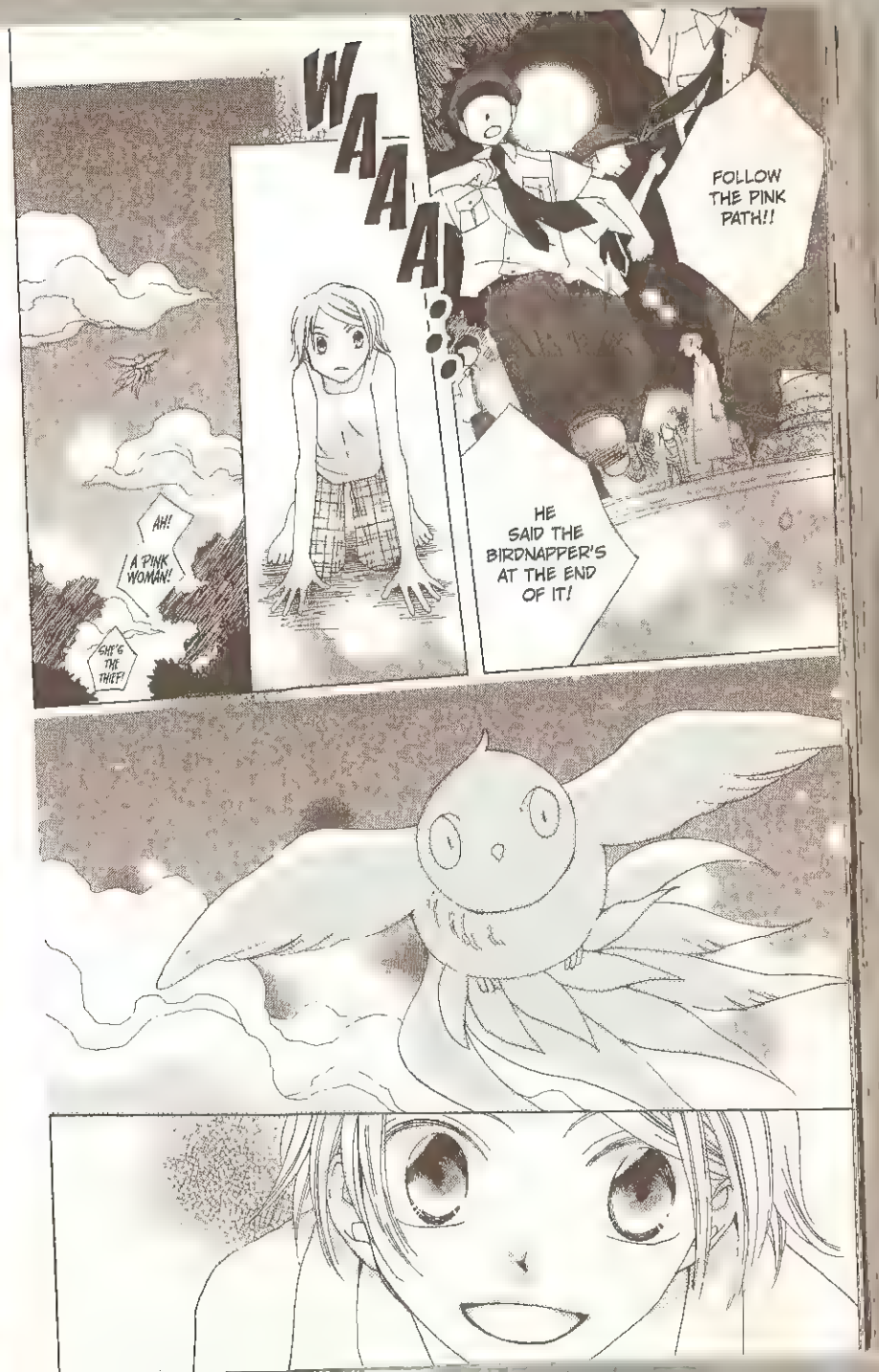
... TO DRAW THE PINK FROM MY BIRD!
YOU'RE TRYING TO DRAW OUT THE COLOR FROM HERE?!

HIP!
AND AS FOR THE FEELING FLOODING INTO MY FINGERTIPS, IT'S JUST ONE...
I WILL NOT LET HER HAVE MY BIRD!
I DON'T NEED A WELL THOUGHT OUT PLAN!
UNBELIEVABLE...
JUST ALL OF MY POWER...

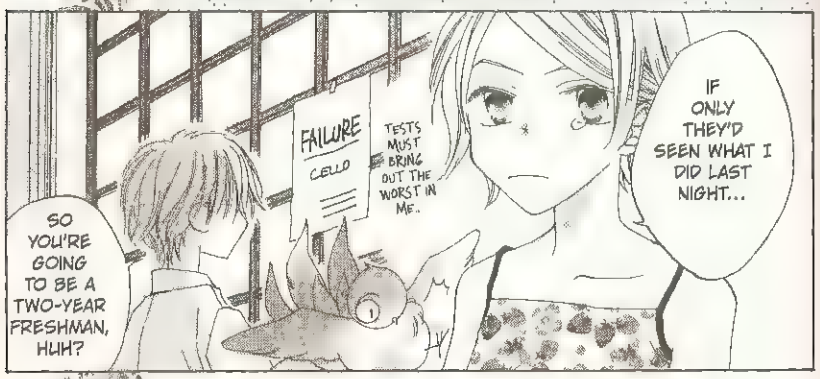

IT'S NOT STOPPING!
WHAT IS THIS?!
NO!
AH!
THE COLOR GOT ON ME!
AND IT'S STAINING THE GROUND, TOO...

BLINK
WH...
WHAT ...?!
THE BIRD'S COLOR IS RUNNING OUT BY ITSELF...


YOU ARE SNOW WHITE NOW!
YOYO!
DID YOU MEAN FOR THAT TO HAPPEN ...?
EXACTLY AS I IMAGINED!
I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU...

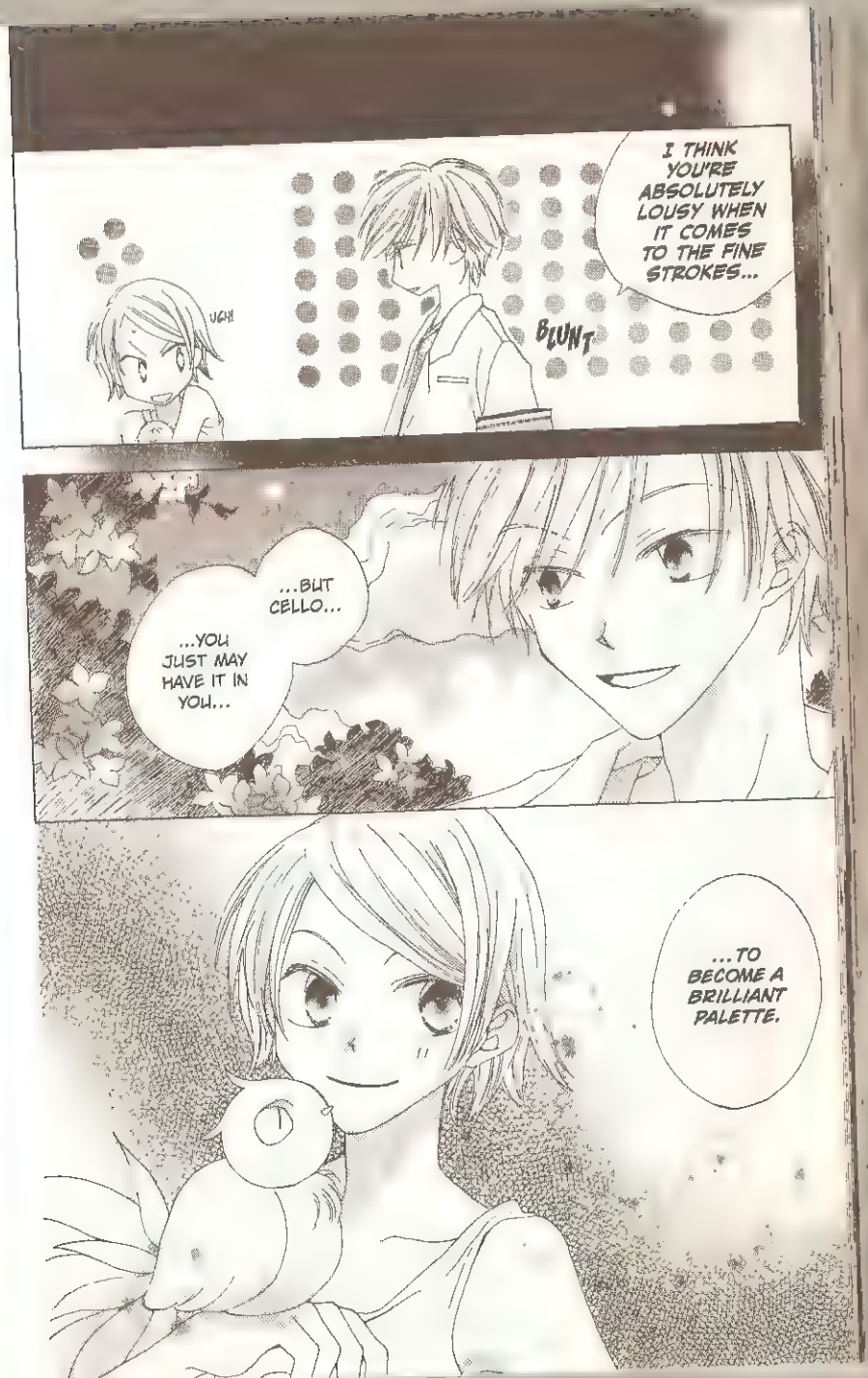

WAAA!
FOLLOW THE PINK PATH!!
HE SAID THE BIRDNAPPER'S AT THE END OF IT!
AH!
A PINK WOMAN!
SHE'S THE THIEF!

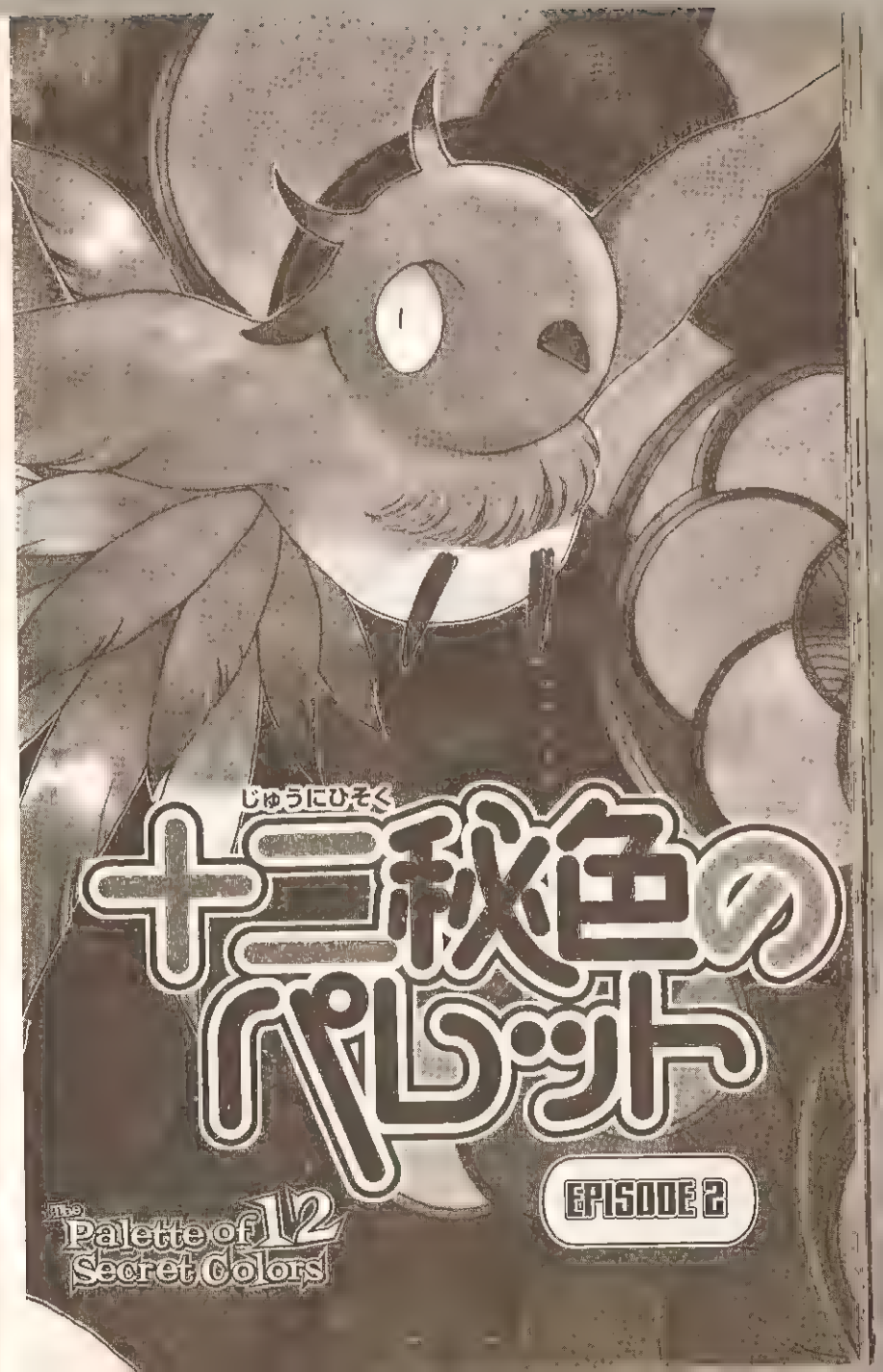
AND SO, ONE MORE COLOR MAGICIAN...

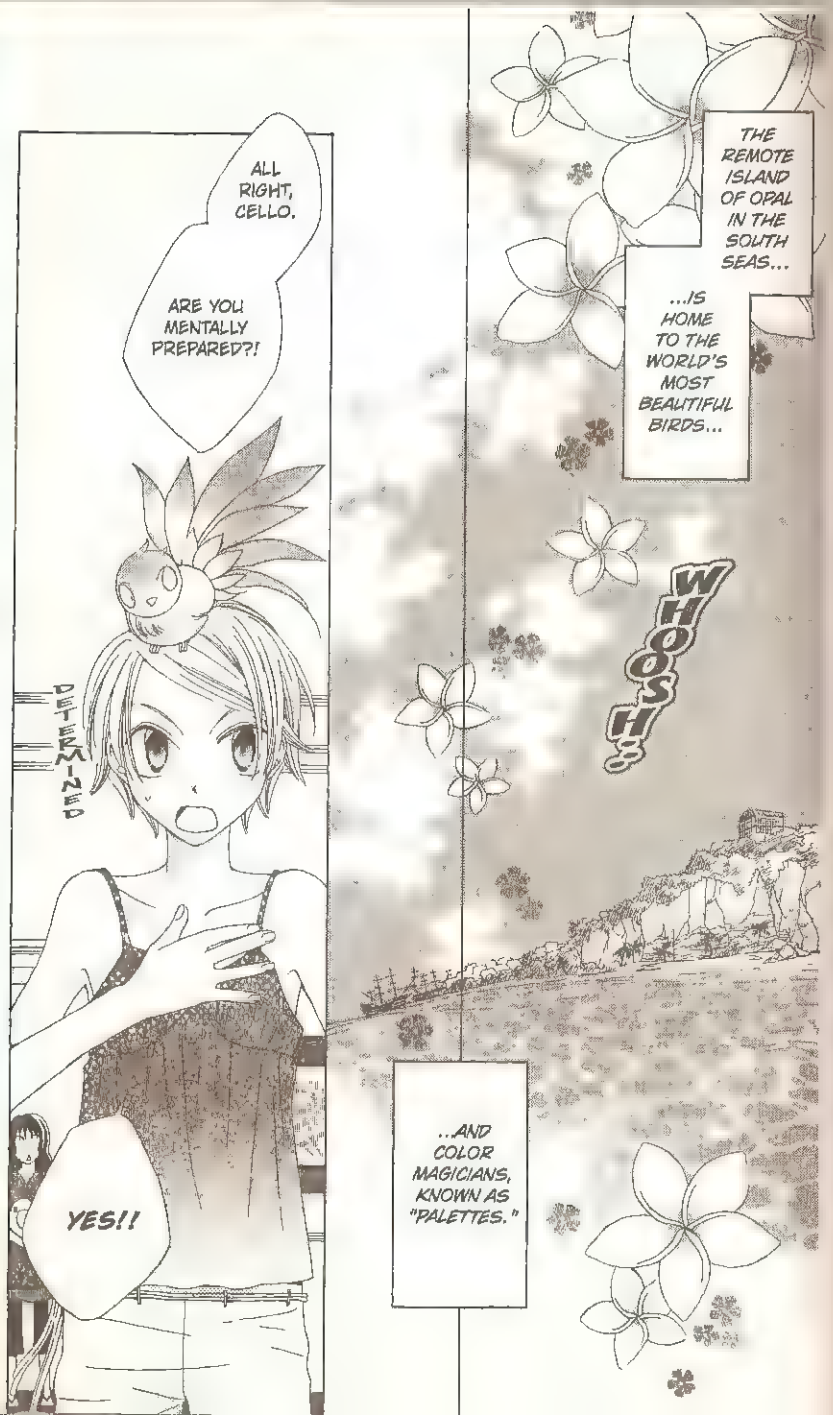

SO YOU'RE GOING TO BE A TWO-YEAR FRESHMAN, HUH?
FAILURE
CELLO
TESTS MUST BRING OUT THE WORST IN ME..
IF ONLY THEY'D SEEN WHAT I DID LAST NIGHT...

...IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING BORN.

EPISODE 1: THE END

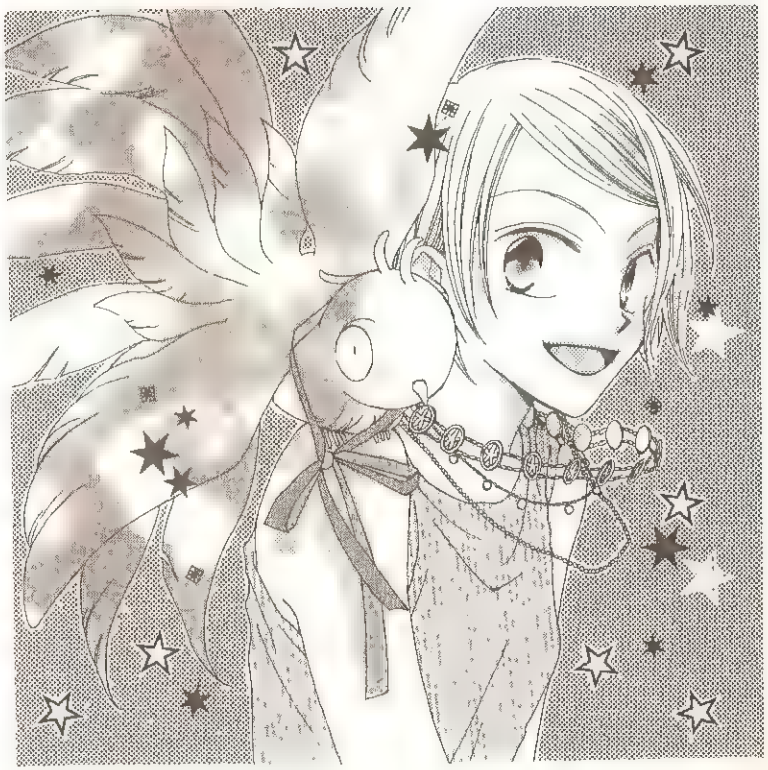

UGH!
BLUNT
I THINK YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY LOUSY WHEN IT COMES TO THE FINE STROKES...
...BUT CELLO...
...YOU JUST MAY HAVE IT IN YOU...
...TO BECOME A BRILLIANT PALETTE.

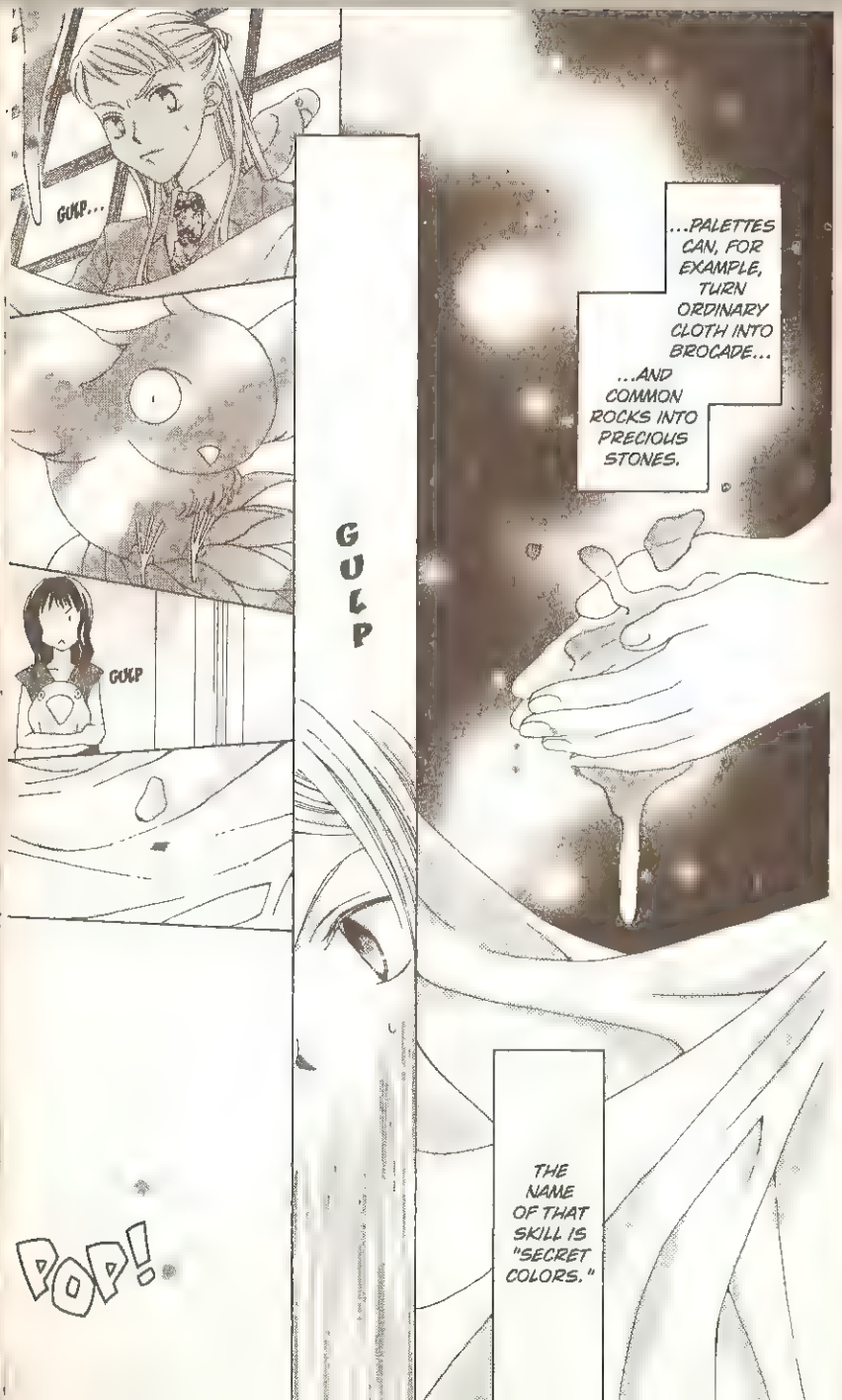

じゅうにひそく
十二秘色のパレット
EPISODE 2
The Palette of 12 Secret Colors


ALL RIGHT, CELLO.
ARE YOU MENTALLY PREPARED?!
DETERMINED
YES!!
THE REMOTE ISLAND OF OPAL IN THE SOUTH SEAS...
...IS HOME TO THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BIRDS...
WHOOSH
...AND COLOR MAGICIANS, KNOWN AS "PALETTES."

Episode 2
Preview Cut

I think this art captures the spirit of the series.



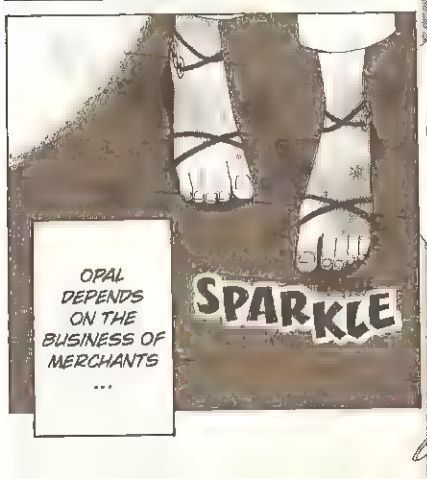

GULP...
...PALETTES CAN, FOR EXAMPLE, TURN ORDINARY CLOTH INTO BROCADE...
...AND COMMON ROCKS INTO PRECIOUS STONES.
GULP
GULP
THE NAME OF THAT SKILL IS "SECRET COLORS."
POP!

PALETTES ARE SPECIAL ARTISANS WHO CAN...
... "STEAL" COLORS FROM WHATEVER THEY TOUCH.
I'M GONNA DO THIS, YOYO!
IF YOU CAN CO_OR THIS CLOTH, YOU CAN GO HOME.
GOOD LUCK!
BY TAKING COLORS FROM THE VIVID PLUMAGE...
THEY'RE PAIRED UP WITH THE TOWN'S TREASURES, BRILLIANTLY COLORED BIRDS.

SO CLOSE...
OH, NO!
I'M A FRESHMAN (MY 2ND TIME AROUND) HERE AT THE PALETTE TRAINING SCHOOL.
...WHO COME FROM THE CONTINENTS, FAR AWAY, TO PURCHASE THE PALETTES' PAINTED GOODS AT A CONSIDERABLE SUM.
FOR ITS PART, THE TOWN PROTECTS THE BIRDS AND PROVIDES THEM TO THE ASPIRING PALETTES FOR THEIR TRAINING.

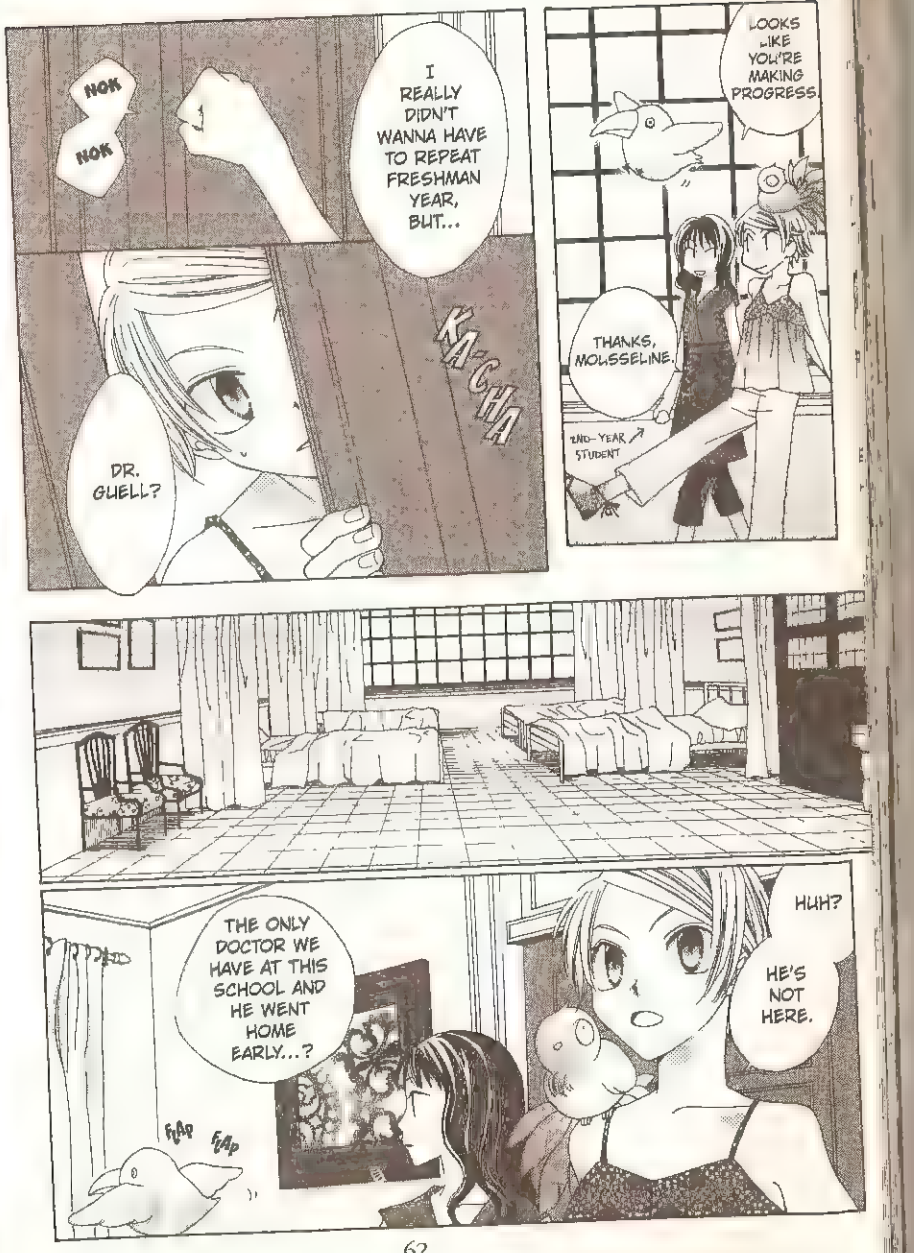
THE INFIRMARY... AGAIN...
UH...
OKAY.
OH, WELL.
LAST YEAR I NEVER EVEN GOT A "SO CLOSE."
GET THEE TO THE INFIRMARY! I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW.
I'M TOO NERVOUS TO TRY REMOVING COLOR FROM A HUMAN MYSELF, SO I'LL PLT YOU IN THE CAPABLE HANDS OF OUR GOOD DOCTOR.
IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT "SECRET COLOR" STAINS CAN ONLY BE REMOVED BY SECRET COLORS... OH, WELL.

...MM.
...MM?
SPARKLE
OH!!
SPARKLE
SPARKLE


OPAL DEPENDS ON THE BUSINESS OF MERCHANTS ...
SPARKLE

CONGRATULATIONS, CELLO!! YOU'VE FINALLY...
YAY!
I DID IT! RIGHT?!

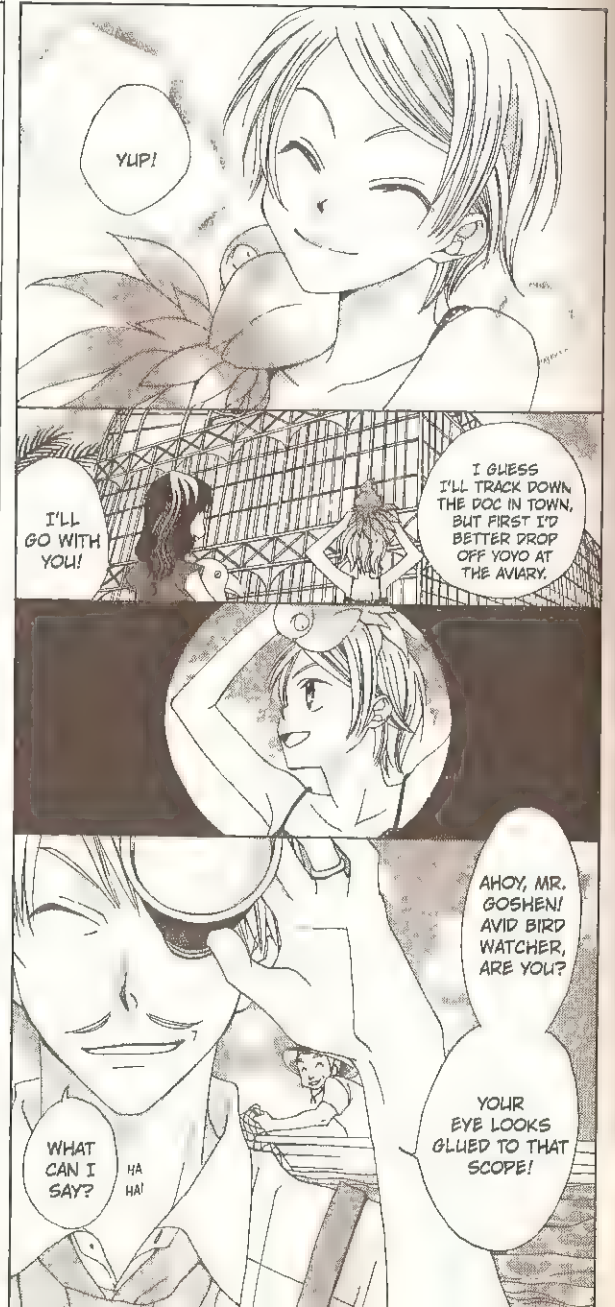
KEEN AS EVER ...
STILL, IT DOESN'T BUG ME.
I MEAN, DESPITE HAVING FLUORESCENT PINK FEET, IT'S NOT LIKE I'M A TOTAL REJECT!
AS MY STUDIES HAVE BEEN ONE FAILURE AFTER ANOTHER, THE ONLY REASON I'M NOT MULTI-COLORED RIGHT NOW IS BECAUSE OF THE DOCTOR'S TREATMENT.
HE ALSO HELPED ME RECENTLY WHEN YOYO WAS BIRDNAPPED.
TAP!
CELLO.
A LETTER.
EH?
"THE DOCTOR ...
...IS OUT RELAXING IN TOWN. IF YOU NEED ME FOR ANYTHING, COME AND GET ME."
HUH!
"IF ANYONE IS READING THIS, THOUGH, I'M SURE IT'S CELLO. SIGNED, GUELL"


NOK
NOK
I REALLY DIDN'T WANNA HAVE TO REPEAT FRESHMAN YEAR, BUT...
KA-CHA
DR. GUELL?
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE MAKING PROGRESS.
THANKS, MOUSSELINE.
2ND-YEAR STUDENT
THE ONLY DOCTOR WE HAVE AT THIS SCHOOL AND HE WENT HOME EARLY...?
HUH?
HE'S NOT HERE.
FLAP FLAP

3

SPEAKING OF BIRDS...

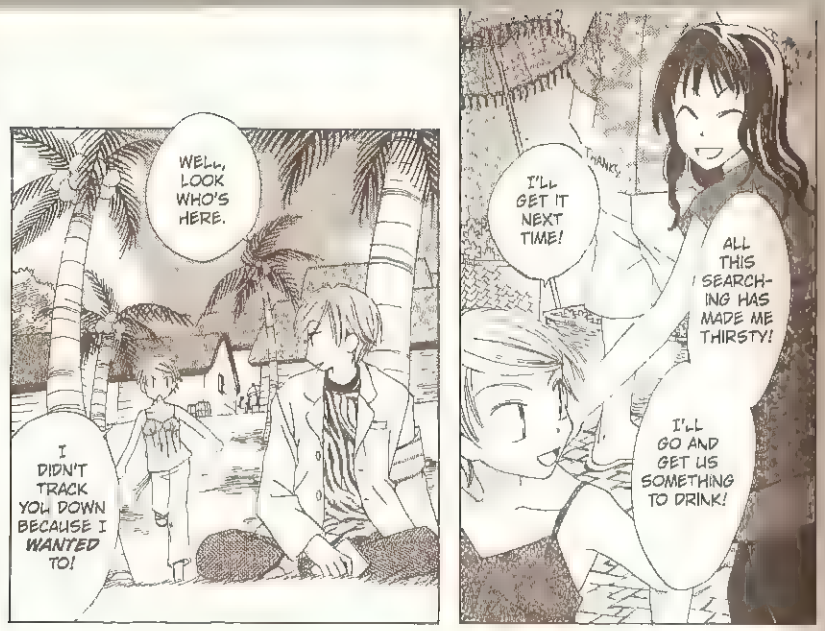
(1) SWALLOWS HAVE BUILT A NEST (AND HATCHED BABY BIRDS!) A NUMBER OF TIMES ON OUR ROOF. ONCE, DURING A LIGHT RAIN, I LOOKED AT OUR GARDEN AND SAW A LONE BABY SWALLOW AMONG THE EGGPLANT STEMS. IT SEEMS HE'D FALLEN OUT OF THE NEST. NOW HE WAS SOAKED WITH HIS FEATHERS ALL WILD AND FLUFFY FROM THE RAIN. LOOKING AT HIM, I FELT A HUGE YANK ON THE HEARTSTRINGS, SO I THOUGHT I'D TRY RETURNING HIM TO THE NEST. I EXTENDED A FINGER AND TO MY SURPRISE, HE LATCHED ON OF HIS OWN ACCORD. I CAREFULLY USED A STEPLADDER TO REUNITE HIM WITH HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE NEST. I WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIM BEING KICKED OUT AFTER BEING "TAINTED" WITH HUMAN SCENT, BUT BY THE END OF THE DAY, I WAS HAPPY TO SEE ALL OF THE LITTLE SPARROWS STANDING UP IN THE NEST. AND THAT'S MY HAPPY LITTLE NEST STORY.


YUP!
I'LL GO WITH YOU!
I GUESS I'LL TRACK DOWN THE DOC IN TOWN, BUT FIRST I'D BETTER DROP OFF YOYO AT THE AVIARY.
AHOY, MR. GOSHEN! AVID BIRD WATCHER, ARE YOU?
YOUR EYE LOOKS GLUED TO THAT SCOPE!
WHAT CAN I SAY?
HA HA!

USUALLY, PALETTES HAVE TO DIRECTLY TOUCH SOMETHING TO CONTROL ITS COLOR...
PAT!
...BUT I CAN DO IT EVEN FROM A DISTANCE! SEE?
WOW!
HMM
TWIRL
AND THAT'S NOT ALL! RECENTLY ...
SSSS...
...I FOUND I CAN EVEN DO LONG-DISTANCE GRAFFITI!
HEH-HEH
IS THAT A GOOD THING?
GOOD FOR YOU!
SO NO MORE MOPING AROUND! IT'S POSITIVE ATTITUDE FROM HERE ON OUT!
PAT PAT
JUST GOES TO SHOW THAT EVEN IF I'M A WASHOUT AT WHAT EVERYONE ELSE CAN DO...
... NOBODY ELSE CAN DO WHAT I CAN!

RUSTLE
HMM... EVERY-THING IS READY.
IT'S TIME TO PUT OUR PLAN INTO ACTION!
WHOOSH...
THAT PALETTE TRAINEE... CELLO IS HER NAME, I BELIEVE ...
SHE'S THE KEY, SO HANDLE HER WITH CARE.
WHOOSH
CONTACT ALL PERSONNEL!
OKAY, BOSS!

SAY, HAVE YOU BEEN TO...
...THAT ISLET OVER THERE?
YOU WANNA BE CAREFUL WITH THAT. IT'S ALRIGHT NOW, BUT COME HIGH TIDE, IT'LL BE PRETTY WELL SUBMERGED.
I'VE GOT NOTHING BETTER TO DO UNTIL MY CARGO GETS LOADED UP. WE SET SAIL TOMORROW THOUGH.
YOU'VE TAKEN THE BOAT OUT EVERY DAY SINCE COMING TO OPAL.
CREAK
CREAK
ACTUALLY, I DON'T BELIEVE THERE IS.
TOO TINY!
WHAT A SHAME.
HAHA
I'D SAY EACH ROCK IS MAYBE BIG ENOUGH FOR TWO OR THREE PEOPLE TO STAND ON.
IS THAT RIGHT?
AND IS THERE ANYTHING OF NOTE ON THE ISLET?
THUNK


WELL, LOOK WHO'S HERE.
I DIDN'T TRACK YOU DOWN BECAUSE I WANTED TO!
I'LL GET IT NEXT TIME!
THANKS.
ALL THIS SEARCHING HAS MADE ME THIRSTY!
I'LL GO AND GET US SOMETHING TO DRINK!

WH
WHAT?
I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO ALL DAY...
...SO I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT YOU.
FOR EXAMPLE...
STARE

THE PORT TOWN OF OPAL.
I'D LIKE TO GO SHOPPING OR SOMETHING WITH YOYO.
OH, SURE, ME TOO, WITH KECHONPA.
THIS IS KECHONPA
EXACTLY
BUT THEY ARE OPAL'S MOST VALUED TREASURES SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
IF ONLY REMOVING THE BIRDS FROM THE SANCTUARY WEREN'T SUCH A SERIOUS CRIME...
AH
HOLD UP!
THERE HE IS!
DR. GUELL!

THAT'LL DO IT.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
YOU CAN GIVE YOYO HIS COLOR BACK WHEN YOU RETURN TO THE SCHOOL ...

UH-HUH...
THANKS TO YOU, I FEEL LIKE I'M REALLY FULFILLING MY ROLE AS A SCHOOL DOCTOR.
SO I'M GRATE-FUL FOR THAT.
JUST LIKE LAST YEAR...
...I'VE HAD TO CLEAN YOU UP MORE THAN ALL MY OTHER PATIENTS COMBINED.
...WHICH IS KIND OF A PAIN.
ALONG THOSE LINES.
THIS IS THE KIND OF PERSON THE DOCTOR IS.
I'M SO USED TO SEEING YOU THAT I FEEL ANTSY WHEN I DON'T.
I CAN'T GET YOU OUT OF MY HEAD ...

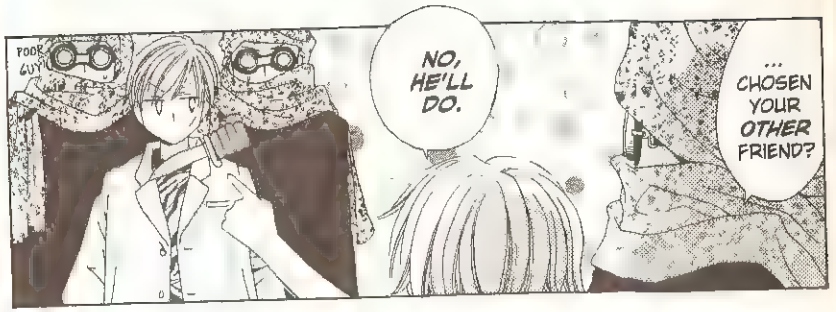
TAP
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.
ZAA!
...WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
SOMEB--
AH, AH, AH! TRY CALLING ANYONE AND HIS LIFE IS FORFEIT!
NOW, WHY DON'T YOU BE A GOOD GIRL AND COME WITH US?

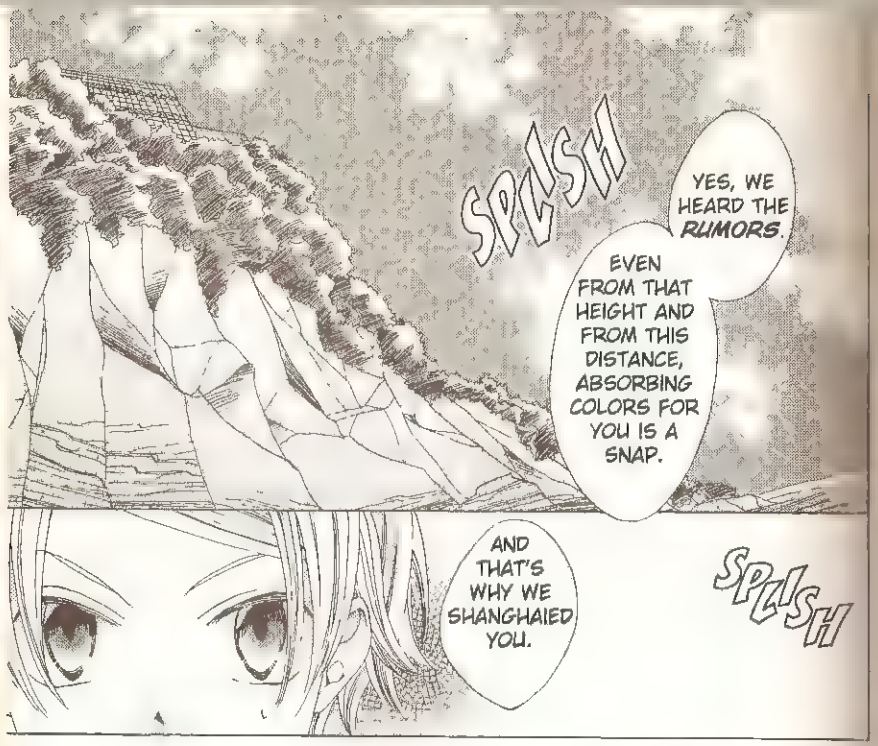
M...
MY TALENT ...?!
?!
WE WISH TO MAKE USE OF YOUR TALENT.
GONG!!
WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY NEED CELLO FOR?!
WELL, THANKS A LOT!
HMM...
PERHAPS THE TWO OF YOU AREN'T AS CLOSE AS I'D ASSUMED.
IN WHICH CASE, TAKING HIM AS A HOSTAGE TO ENSURE YOUR COOPERATION...
FLICK
AH!
AH!
STOP ...
...WASN'T SO CLEVER. MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE...

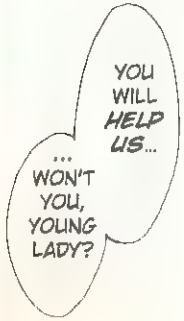
4

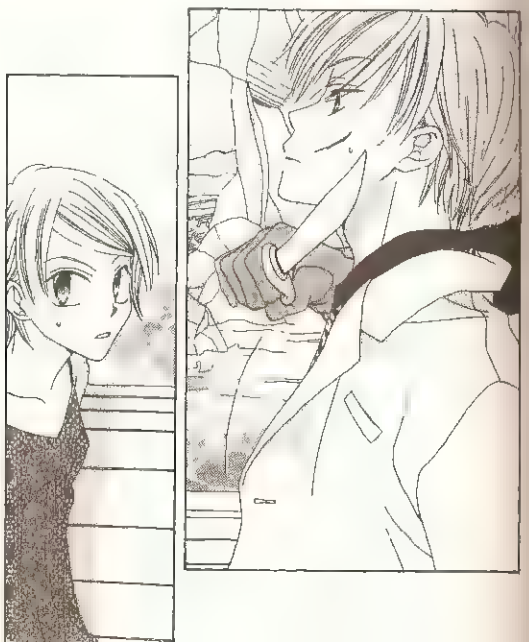
SPEAKING OF BIRDS...(2)

THAT SAME YEAR, THE SPARROWS HATCHED TONS OF BABIES IN THE NEST ON OUR ROOF. I STARED AT THEM EVERY CHANCE I GOT AND EXCEPT FOR WHEN THE SPARROW PARENTS LET LOOSE WITH THEIR DROPPINGS, THOSE SPARROWS WERE CUUUUTE. ONE DAY, CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT KIND OF REACTION THEY'D HAVE, I CRIED "YO!" AND WAVED MY HAND RIGHT UNDER THE NEST. THE SURPRISED SPARROWS FLEW AWAY EN MASSE, LEAVING ME BEHIND TO FEEL FOOLISH. THAT NIGHT, A TYPHOON HIT. IN THE MORNING, I WENT TO CHECK ON THE NEST; THE SPARROWS WERE BACK, BUT I'M NOT SURE IF THEY WERE ALL THERE. AND THAT'S MY NOT-SO-GOOD NEST STORY.

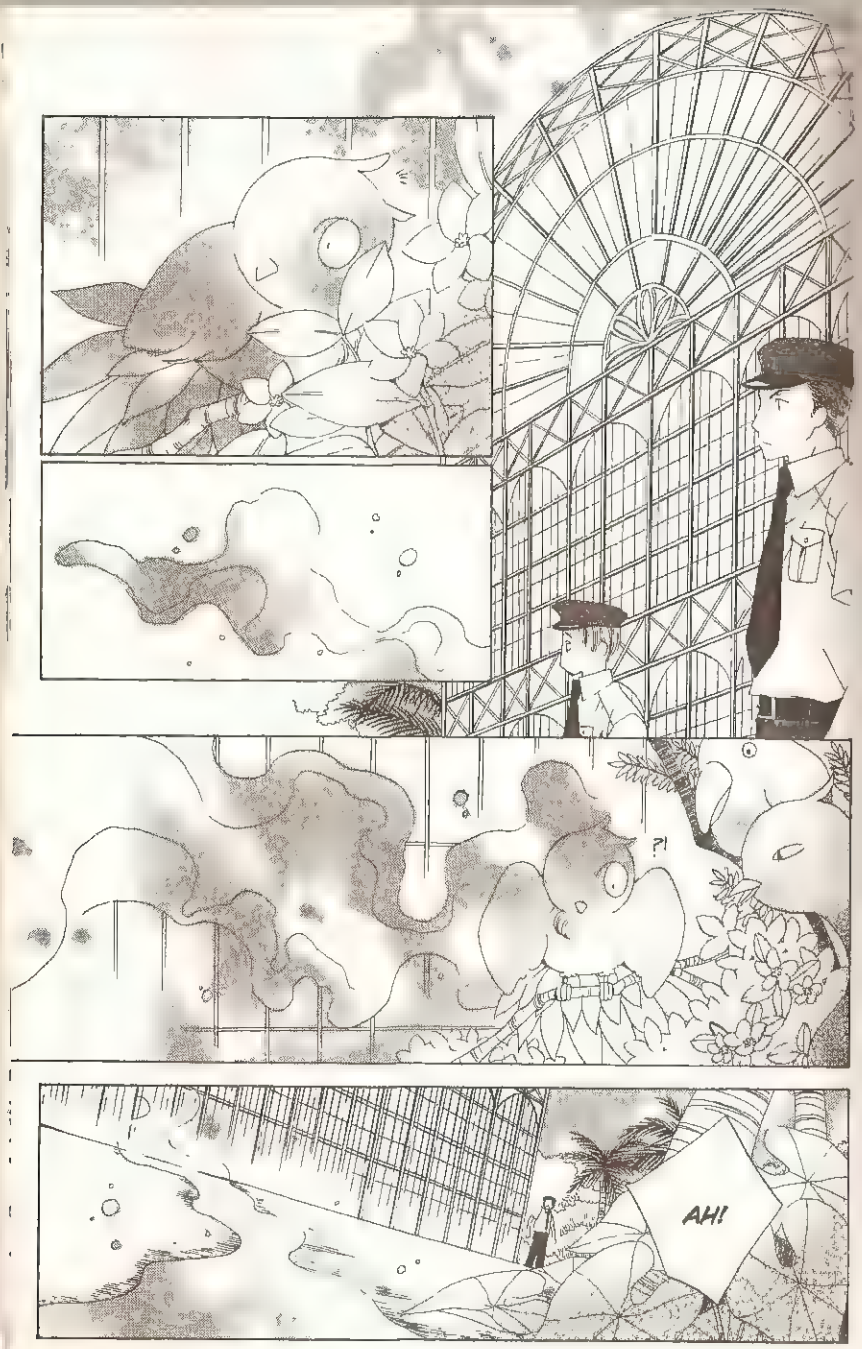



SPLISH
YES, WE HEARD THE RUMORS.
EVEN FROM THAT HEIGHT AND FROM THIS DISTANCE, ABSORBING COLORS FOR YOU IS A SNAP.
AND THAT'S WHY WE SHANGHAIED YOU.
SPLISH


YOU WILL HELP US...
... WON'T YOU, YOUNG LADY?



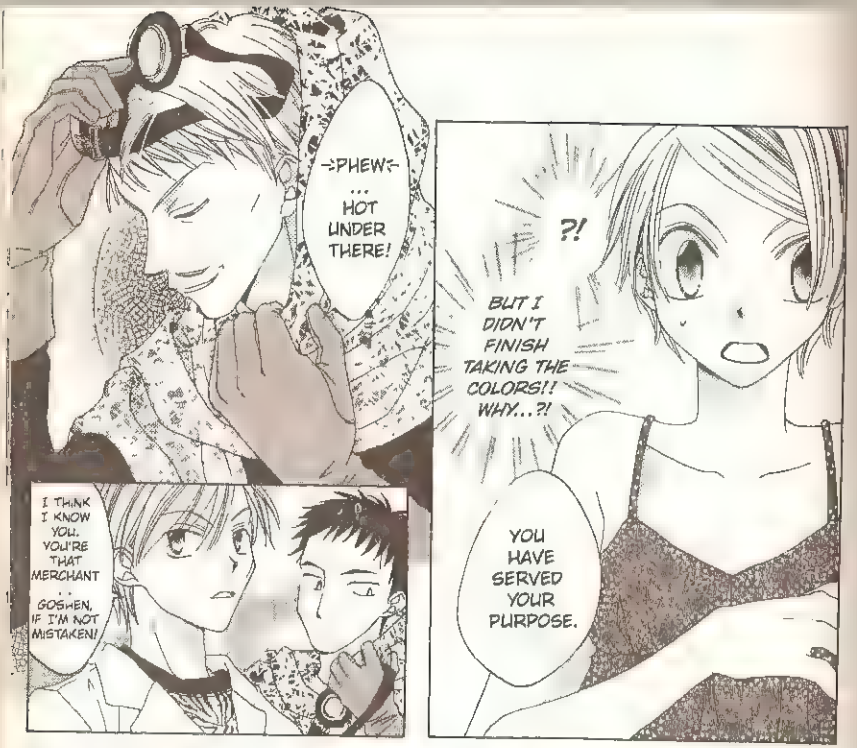
BUT THE FACT THAT WE'RE HOSTAGES, YOU'RE MASKED AND WE'RE IN A BOAT SUGGESTS YOU ALREADY KNEW THAT ...
...AND CAME UP WITH AN EVIL PLAN ANYWAY.
THE AVIARY IS AT THE HEART OF THE SANCTUARY AND IT'S GOT TIGHT SECURITY.
SANCTUARY (INCLUDING THE SCHOOL GROUNDS)
PORT TOWN
Opal
NOT ONLY THAT, IT'S LOCATED NEXT TO A SHEER CLIFF, HARDLY INVITING TO THIEVES.
.....
A SIMPLE TASK FOR YOU, IS IT NOT?
THAT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT ...
...BUT WE DON'T WANT THIS GIRL TO STEAL BIRDS FOR US. ALL WE'RE AFTER ARE COLORS.
THE COLORS FROM THE BIRDS' FEATHERS.

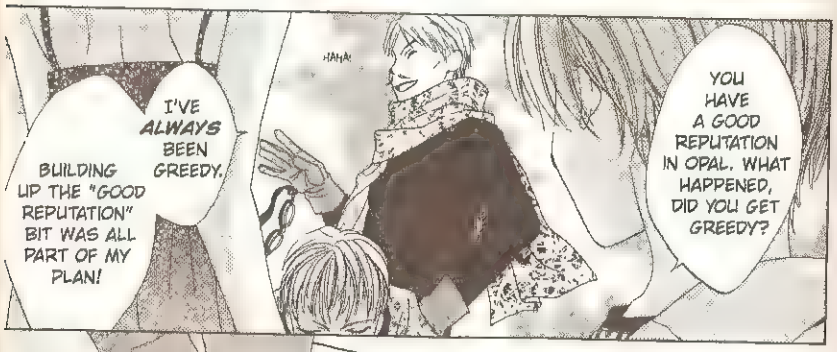

?!
AH!

I NEVER IMAGINED...
...I'D HAVE TO USE MY TALENT FOR THIS.
TAP
I'M SORRY, YOYO.

PEEP
COO!
PEEP
COO!
SQUEEZE
RUSTLE...
COO!
GRAB
THANK YOU. THAT'S ENOUGH.

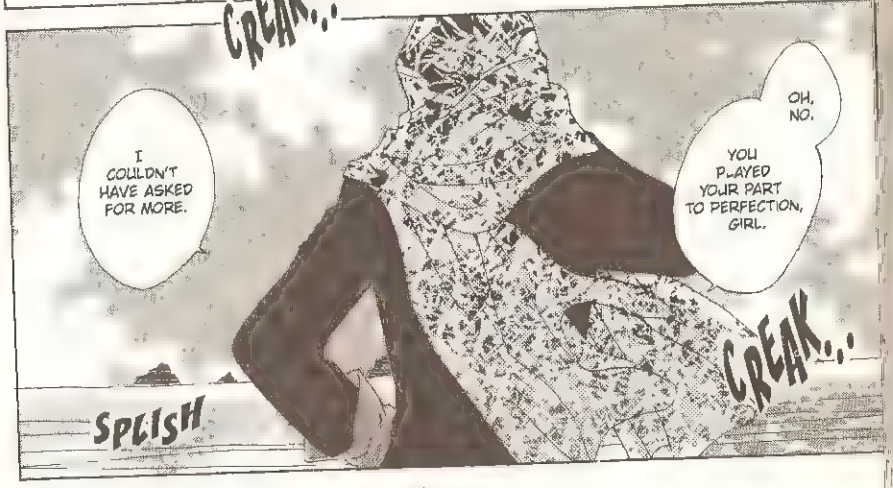
WE'VE GOT A THIEF!!
IT'S ...
IT'S A COLOR THIEF!!
WHOA!
SHE'S NOT USED TO COMPLIMENTS ...
EMBARRASSED
BRAVO.
EX-CELLENT WORK.
CLAP CLAP
DASH DASH DASH
IN BACK OF THE AVIARY!
THE BACK?! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

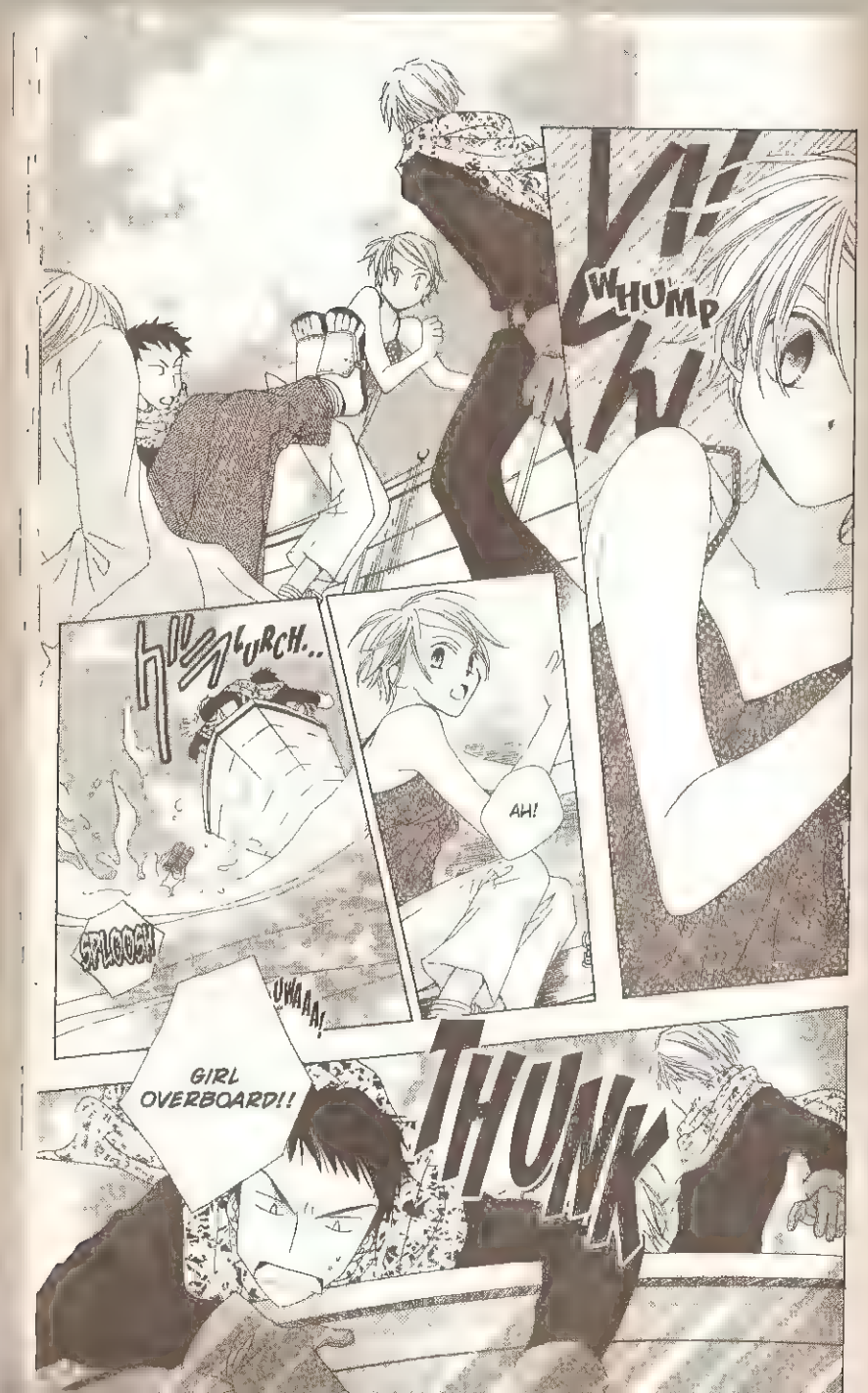

-PHEW-
...
HOT UNDER THERE!
I THINK I KNOW YOU. YOU'RE THAT MERCHANT... GOSHEN, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN!
?!
BUT I DIDN'T FINISH TAKING THE COLORS!! WHY...?!
YOU HAVE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE.


HAHA!
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN GREEDY.
BUILDING UP THE "GOOD REPUTATION" BIT WAS ALL PART OF MY PLAN!
YOU HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION IN OPAL. WHAT HAPPENED, DID YOU GET GREEDY?

TOK
...SO I'M JUST GIVING THE CUSTOMERS WHAT THEY WANT.
THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE WHO WANT TO GET THEIR HANDS ON OPAL'S MAGNIFICENT BIRDS...

DID I...
...FAIL?
UM.
BECAUSE I SWEAR I REALLY TRIED!
SO PLEASE DON'T PUNISH THE DOCTOR FOR MY...
IT APPEARS THAT THE GUARDS HAVE LEFT THE AVIARY.
EH? BUT THE COLORS HAVEN'T...
LET'S GO!
OKAY, BOSS!
ONLY CELLO'S FEET ARE TIED...


CREAK...
I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR MORE.
OH, NO.
YOU PLAYED YOUR PART TO PERFECTION, GIRL.
SPLISH
CREAK...

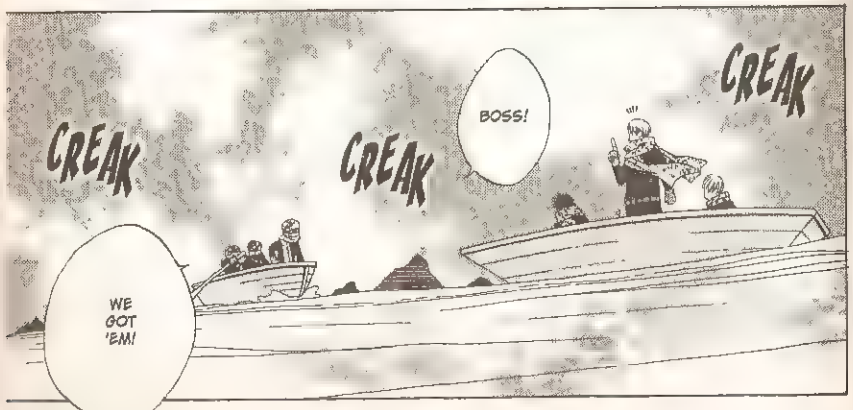

Y!!
WHUMP
HU
LURCH...
AH!
SPLOOSH
UWAAA!
GIRL OVERBOARD!!
THUNK

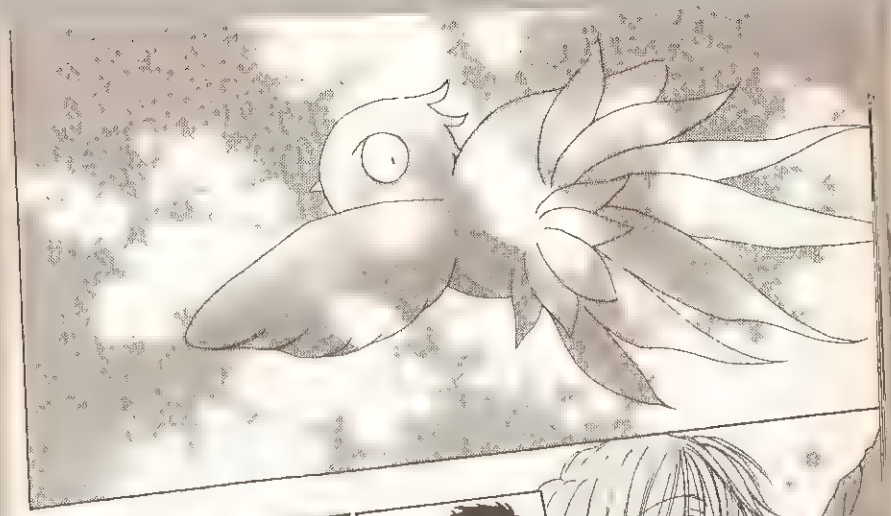
FOR THEM, I RACK MY BRAIN, FIRE UP MY HEART ...
COMPANY MOTTO
CREAK...
...ON PINS AND NEEDLES, WITH BUNDLES AND BUNDLES OF CASH.
MY DEAR CUSTOMERS ARE WAITING FOR ME ...
...FILL MY ENTIRE BODY WITH RESOLVE ...
CREAK...
...STEEL MY SPINE...
... AND AS NECESSARY ... GET MY HANDS DIRTY.
THAT IS HOW I RUN THE GOSHEN TRADING COMPANY. IT'S BUSINESS, NOTHING PERSONAL ...
GOODBYE.
GRIN

GRAB
KLAK
DISPOSE OF HIM.
WHIZZZ
?!
WHAT THE...?!

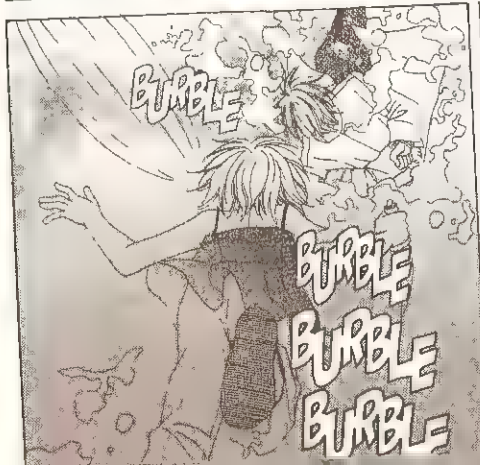
WHOAAA!
BUMP
SPLASH
KRRAK
YOU'RE MORE CUNNING THAN I EXPECTED, DOCTOR.
THUM

WATCH CLOSELY!
THEY HAVE TO COME UP FOR AIR SOME ...
SWIK
-GASP!-
WHAT KIND OF LUNG CAPACITIES DO THEY HAVE?!
THAT FAR?!


CREAK
CREAK
BOSS!
CREAK
WE GOT 'EM!



SUNUVA ...
SPLOOSH
AH!
SWISH


BUBBLE
BUBBLE
BUBBLE
BUBBLE

SCRATCH SCRATCH
EMPLOYEE REVIEW?!
...A PUNISHMENT AT WORST!
THAT WILL RESULT IN A SALARY REDUCTION AT BEST ...

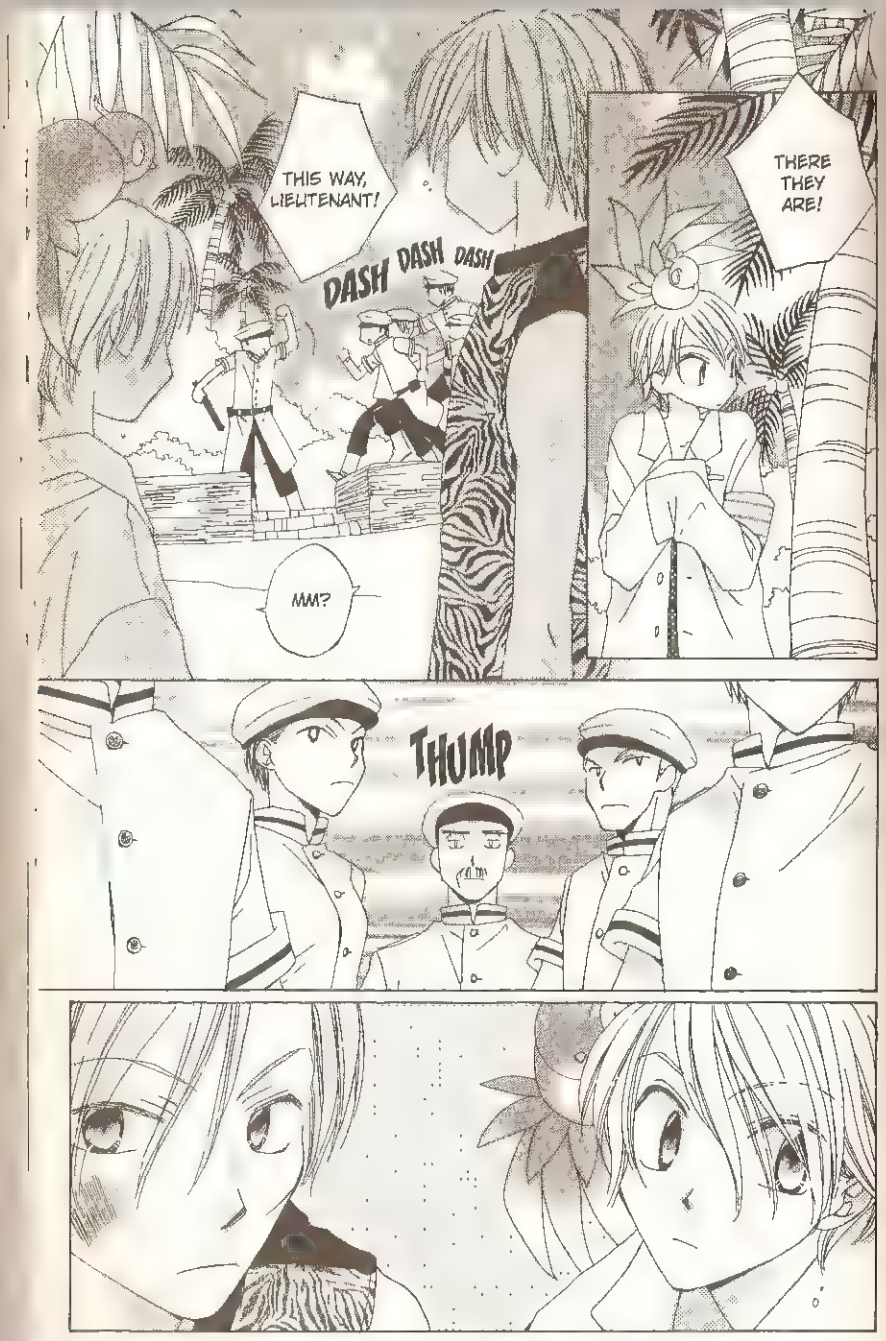
5

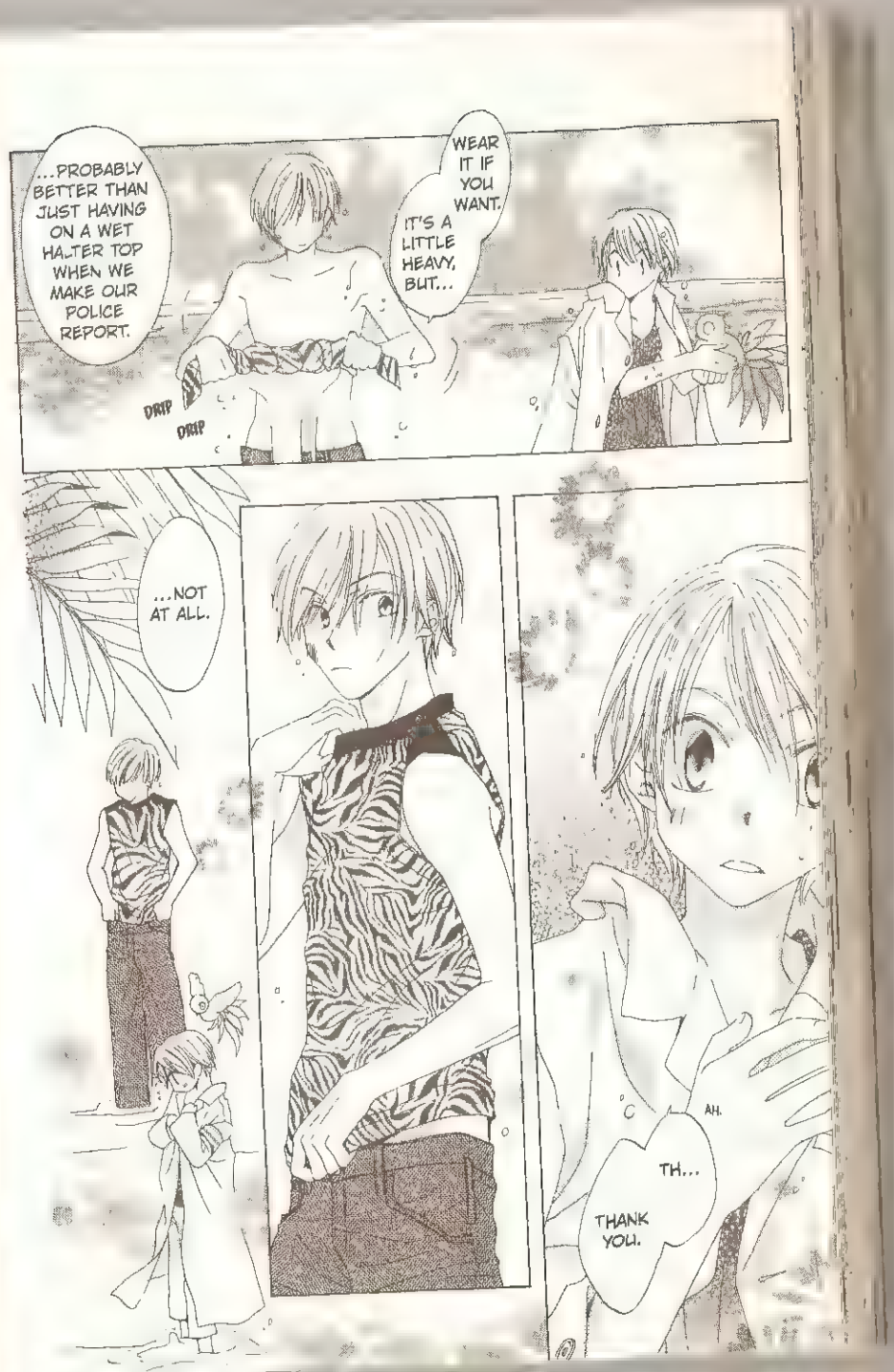
SPEAKING OF BIRDS...(3)

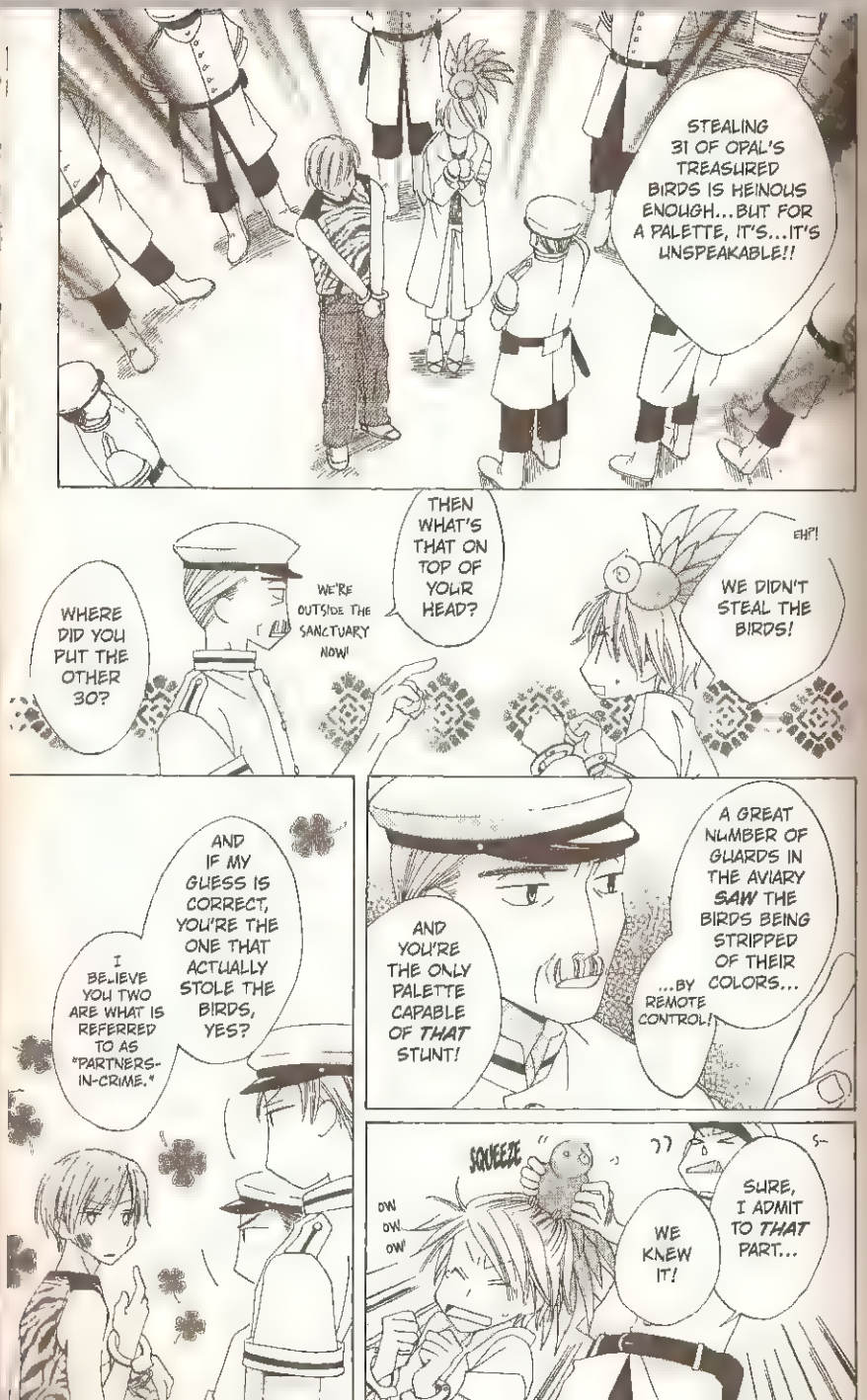
WHEN I WAS A UNIVERSITY STUDENT, I WOULD CHANGE TRAINS EN ROUTE AT ONE PARTICULAR STATION. ONE DAY, A FRIEND AND I SAW A BUSH WARB..ER LYING ON THE P..ATFORM. WE HYPOTHESIZED THAT IT FLEW INTO THE GLASS OF A BUILDING OR SOMETHING AND WAS WEAKENED.
WE SECURED THE BIRD AND BROUGHT IT TO A VETERINARIAN, WHO TOLD US, "IF THE BIRD CAN'T FLY ANYMORE, YOU CAN RAISE IT IF YOU WANT." THE RECEPTIONIST CALLED US "THE WARBLER PEOPLE". LATER THE VET, MY FRIEND AND I WENT TO A FISHING SHOP, WHERE WE BOUGHT WORMS, WHICH WE THOUGHT WOULD MAKE SUITABLE FOOD.
THEN MY FRIEND CONTINUED ON TO SCHOOL WHILE I TOOK THE WARBLER BACK HOME. AFTER GETTING BACK, AS SOON AS I CUT ONE OF THE WORMS INTO BITE-SIZES, THE WARBLER FLEW AWAY INTO THE SKY AND NEVER LOOKED BACK. HE SHOULD'VE HAD THE COURTESY TO AT LEAST HAVE ONE BITE...

CAN YOU BLAME ME? YOU ALWAYS LOOK LIKE YOU HAVE THE ENERGY OF SOMEONE WHO JUST ROLLED OUT OF BED...
RIGHT?
...IT SEEMS THAT GOSHEN'S GOONS VIEWED ME THE SAME WAY.
I GOTTA SAY, I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D SAVE ME.
HEH- HEH
RUDE, THE WHOLE LOT OF YOU!
IS THAT SO?
YEP!
YOU'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN ME ROLL OUT OF BED!
SPLISH SPLISH
SQUEEZE
FWAP

SLOSH SLOSH
THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH TO CALL IT A DAY.
WELL THEN ...
...I THINK SO.
HUFF
SPLASH
HUFF
SPLASH
HUFF
SPLASH
THAT WAS A LONG SWIM
WE SHOULD BE SAFE NOW, RIGHT?
FINALLY REACHED THE ISLAND!
SORRY I GOT YOU HURT.
SILENTLY? I COULD GO FOR THAT. IF IT'S NOT TOO LATE, WHY DON'T YOU SWIM BACK TO THEM?
I PROBABLY WOULD'VE BEEN SHARK FOOD BY NOW IF YOYO HADN'T'VE SWOOPED BY!
AND THEN YOU'D HAVE SEEN ME EVERY NIGHT, A PALE FIGURE STANDING SILENTLY NEXT TO YOUR PILLOW...


THIS WAY, LIEUTENANT!
DASH DASH DASH
THERE THEY ARE!
MM?
THUMP


...PROBABLY BETTER THAN JUST HAVING ON A WET HALTER TOP WHEN WE MAKE OUR POLICE REPORT.
IT'S A LITTLE HEAVY, BUT...
WEAR IT IF YOU WANT.
DRIP
DRIP
...NOT AT ALL.
AH.
TH...
THANK YOU.


STEALING 31 OF OPAL'S TREASURED BIRDS IS HEINOUS ENOUGH... BUT FOR A PALETTE, IT'S... IT'S UNSPEAKABLE!!
WHERE DID YOU PUT THE OTHER 30?
WE'RE OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY NOW!
THEN WHAT'S THAT ON TOP OF YOUR HEAD?
EH?!
WE DIDN'T STEAL THE BIRDS!
I BE..IEVE YOU TWO ARE WHAT IS REFERRED TO AS "PARTNERS-IN-CRIME."
AND IF MY GUESS IS CORRECT, YOU'RE THE ONE THAT ACTUALLY STOLE THE BIRDS, YES?
AND YOU'RE THE ONLY PALETTE CAPABLE OF *THAT* STUNT!
A GREAT NUMBER OF GUARDS IN THE AVIARY *SAW* THE BIRDS BEING STRIPPED OF THEIR COLORS...
...BY REMOTE CONTROL!
SQUEEZE
OW OW OW
WE KNEW IT!
SURE, I ADMIT TO *THAT* PART...

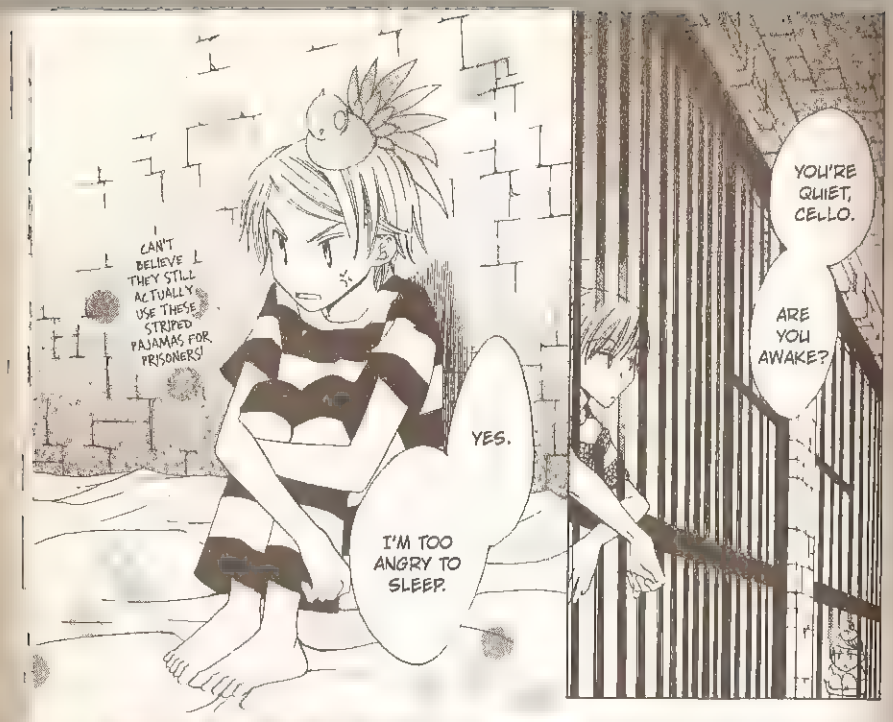
RATTLE...
YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE, DON'T YOU?
UM...
KLACK

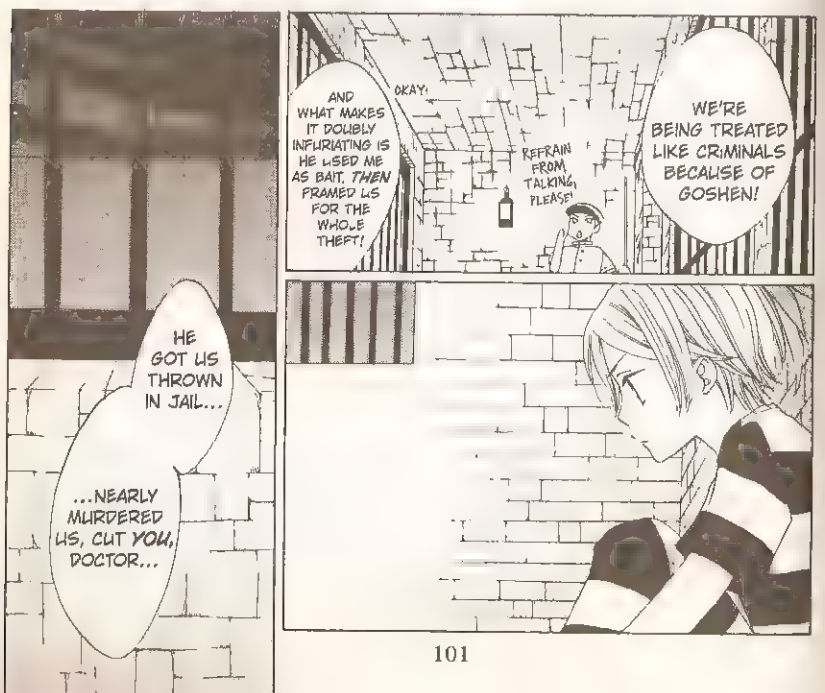
GOSHEN THE MERCHANT!!
WHO IS THE CRIMINAL THEN?
... VERY WELL.

PARTNERS-IN-CRIME ...?
YOU SPLIT UP THE CRIMINAL DUTIES. AS ONE WAS CAUSING A COLORFUL DISTRACTION ...
...THE OTHER TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO BURGLARIZE THE SUDDENLY UNGUARDED AVIARY.
DRIP
THEY USED ME AS A DECOY!!
"...ON THE UPTAKE!"
"HELLO, YOU'RE A LITTLE SLOW."
.....!!
NOW I GET IT!
WAIT!
LIKE I SAID, I ADMIT I'M THE "COLOR THIEF", BUT THEY FORCED US TO DO IT!
AND WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE 30 STOLEN BIRDS!

MR. GOSHEN, MY PEOPLE HAVE ORDERS TO SEARCH YOUR BOAT FROM STEM TO STERN.
...BE MY GUEST.
TAK
WE'LL LEARN WHO'S TELLING THE TRUTH SOON ENOUGH.
IF THERE ARE 30 BIRDS ON THIS BOAT, WE'LL FIND THEM.
OUR FIRST TIME?! YOU KIDNAPPED US IN A BOAT BY KNIFEPOINT, HAD A GUN ON US...!!
...IT'S ALL COCK-AND-BULL, LIEUTENANT. I ASSURE YOU.
OKAY, OKAY, QUIET DOWN!
.....

AND SO, MR. GOSHEN...
...I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD COOPERATE WITH OUR INVESTIGATION.
HA HA HA!
THEY CLAIM I STOLE THE BIRDS?
PATENTLY OUTRAGEOUS!
GRRR
FOBBING OFF YOUR OWN SIN ON ANOTHER IS A SIGN OF POOR UPBRINGING ...
...PARTICULARLY WHEN THIS IS OUR FIRST TIME MEETING, MISS.


I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY STILL ACTUALLY USE THESE STRIPED PAJAMAS FOR PRISONERS!
YOU'RE QUIET, CELLO.
ARE YOU AWAKE?
YES.
I'M TOO ANGRY TO SLEEP.

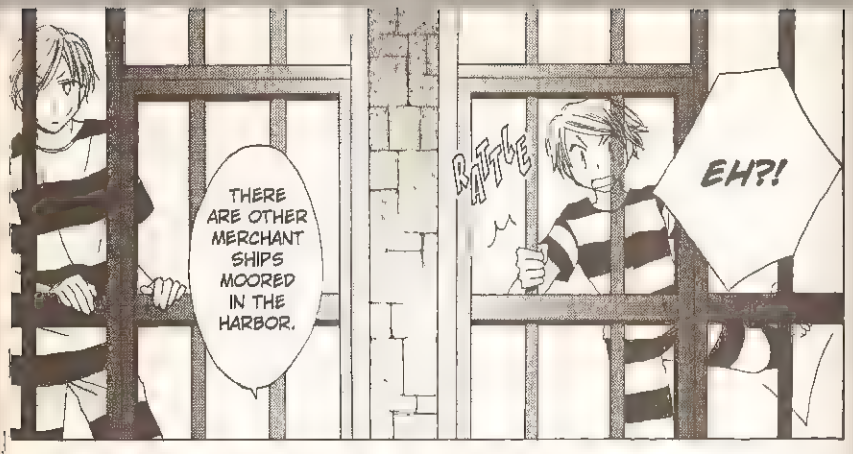

HE GOT US THROWN IN JAIL...
...NEARLY MURDERED US, CUT YOU, DOCTOR...
AND WHAT MAKES IT DOUBLY INFURIATING IS HE USED ME AS BAIT, THEN FRAMED US FOR THE WHOLE THEFT!
OKAY.
REFRAIN FROM TALKING, PLEASE!
WE'RE BEING TREATED LIKE CRIMINALS BECAUSE OF GOSHEN!

SOMEBODY PUT SOME TEA ON.
POLIC
BESIDES, THE INVESTIGATION IS GOING TO TAKE A WHILE.
A CROWD'S STARTING TO GATHER, SO IT'S TIME TO MOVE YOU.
EH?
WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING?
FOLLOW ME.

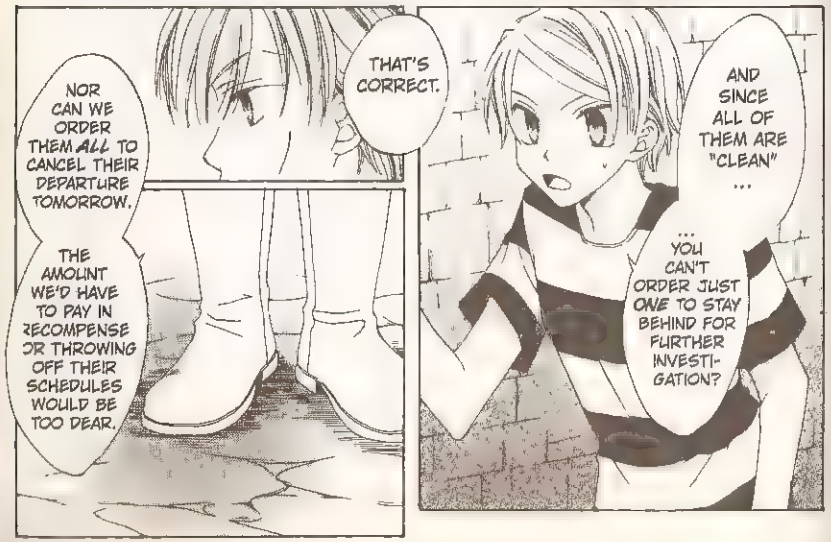
HEY!
D-DO A MORE THOROUGH SEARCH!
I'M TELLING YOU, GOSHEN IS YOUR BIRDNAPPER!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME MY JOB.
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE ...!!
WE HAVE NEWS.
THE SEARCH OF THE SHIP IS CONCLUDED ...
AHA HA! AHA HA! AHA HA!
AH!
HA...
...AND THERE'S NOT AS MUCH AS A FEATHER ABOARD.

TO THINK, WE WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY WILD CARD TALENT...
...AND MADE ME USE...
...MY ONLY SAVING GRACE FOR EVIL!
GOSHEN IS GOING TO PAY FOR THIS!

AH!
HAHA!
THIS IS FUN!
HOW'S THIS?
AHAHA! THAT'S WHAT...
LET'S LAUGH TOGETHER.
LIKE THIS!
...YOU GET!
WHEN THEY BRING THOSE CREEPS IN, I'M GOING TO LAUGH AND SNEER LIKE THERE'S NO TOMORROW!
SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA. MAYBE I'LL DO IT TOO.

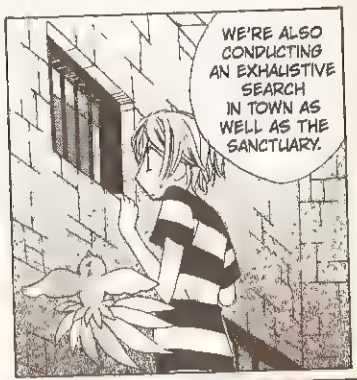

THERE ARE OTHER MERCHANT SHIPS MOORED IN THE HARBOR.
RATTLE
EH?!

MR. GOSHEN'S SHIP IS NOT THE ONLY ONE SLATED TO LEAVE TOMORROW MORN.
WE'VE CHECKED THEM, TOO, OF COURSE, BUT CAME UP EMPTY.


NOR CAN WE ORDER THEM *ALL* TO CANCEL THEIR DEPARTURE TOMORROW.
THE AMOUNT WE'D HAVE TO PAY IN RECOMPENSE OR THROWING OFF THEIR SCHEDULES WOULD BE TOO DEAR.
THAT'S CORRECT.
AND SINCE ALL OF THEM ARE "CLEAN" ...
... YOU CAN'T ORDER JUST *ONE* TO STAY BEHIND FOR FURTHER INVESTI-GATION?

THOSE BOATS ARE INVESTIGATING THE PERIMETER OF THE ENTIRE ISLAND.
TAKE A GANDER OUT THE WINDOW.

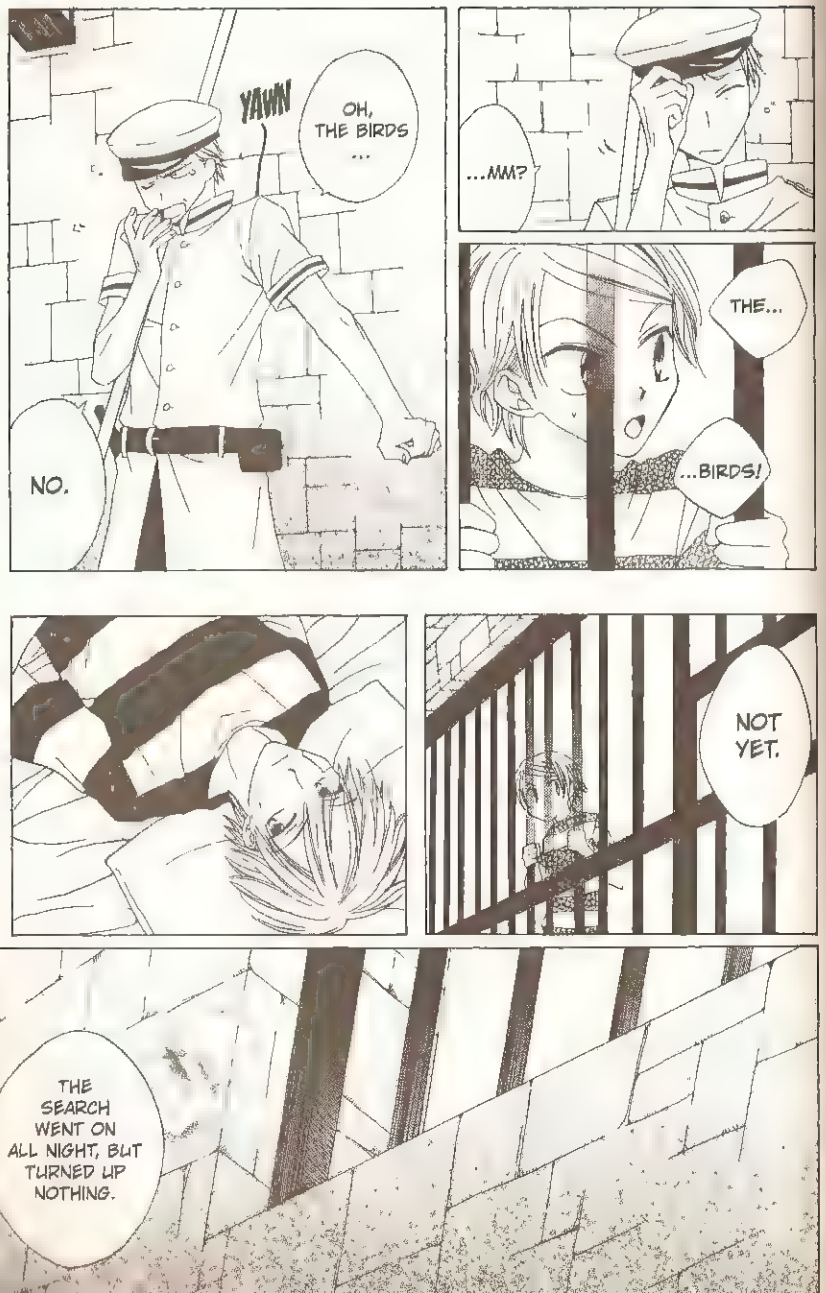
OLGA WAS STOLEN ?!
OLGA
AS TO MR. GOSHEN, THOUGH, HE IS CLEARED TO DEPART TOMORROW MORNING.


WE'RE ALSO CONDUCTING AN EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH IN TOWN AS WELL AS THE SANCTUARY.

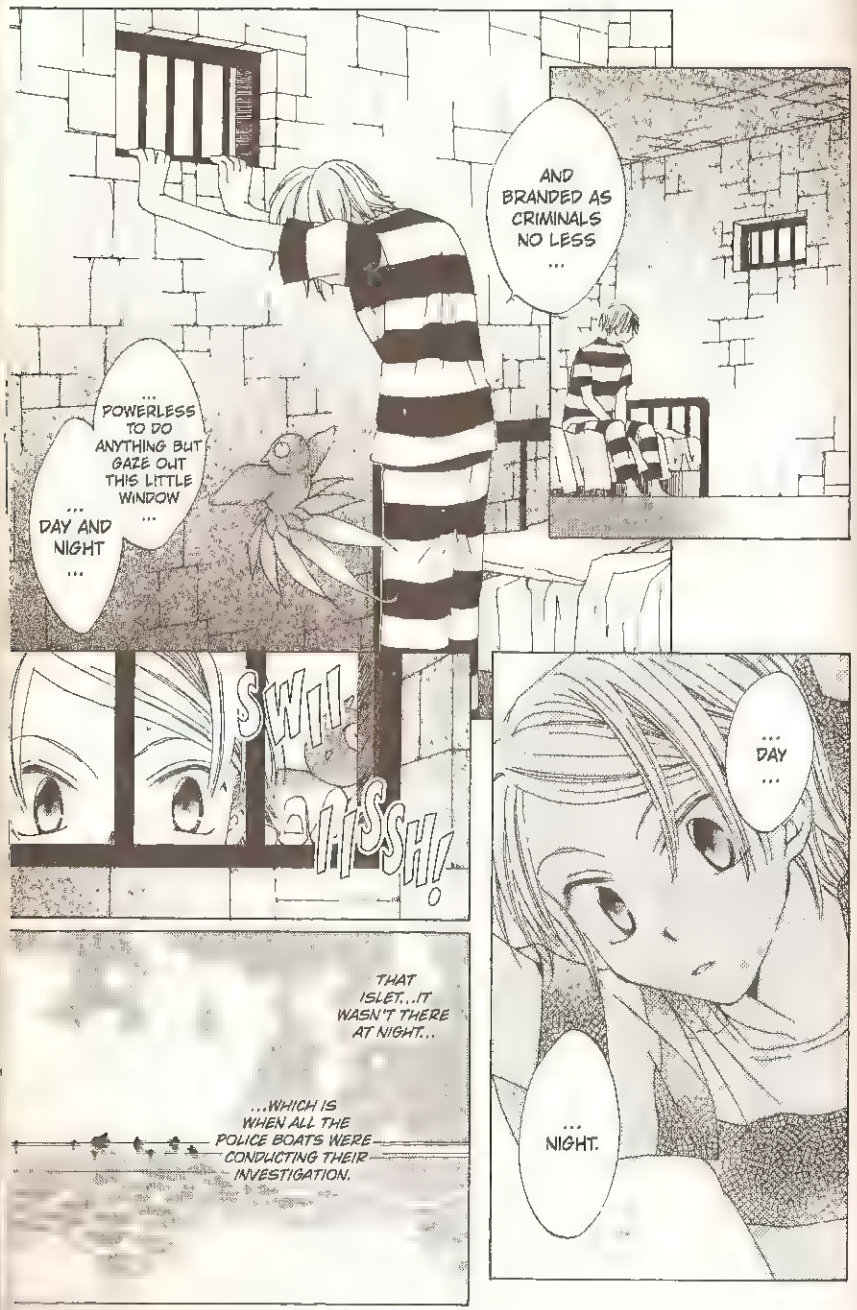
AND WE'RE TRYING TO GLEAN ANY INFORMATION THAT WE CAN...
...FROM THE BIRDS IN THE AVIARY THAT ESCAPED CAPTURE.
BUT ALL WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO DISCERN SO FAR IS THAT THE DOCTOR'S BIRD IS AMONG THE 30 TAKEN.

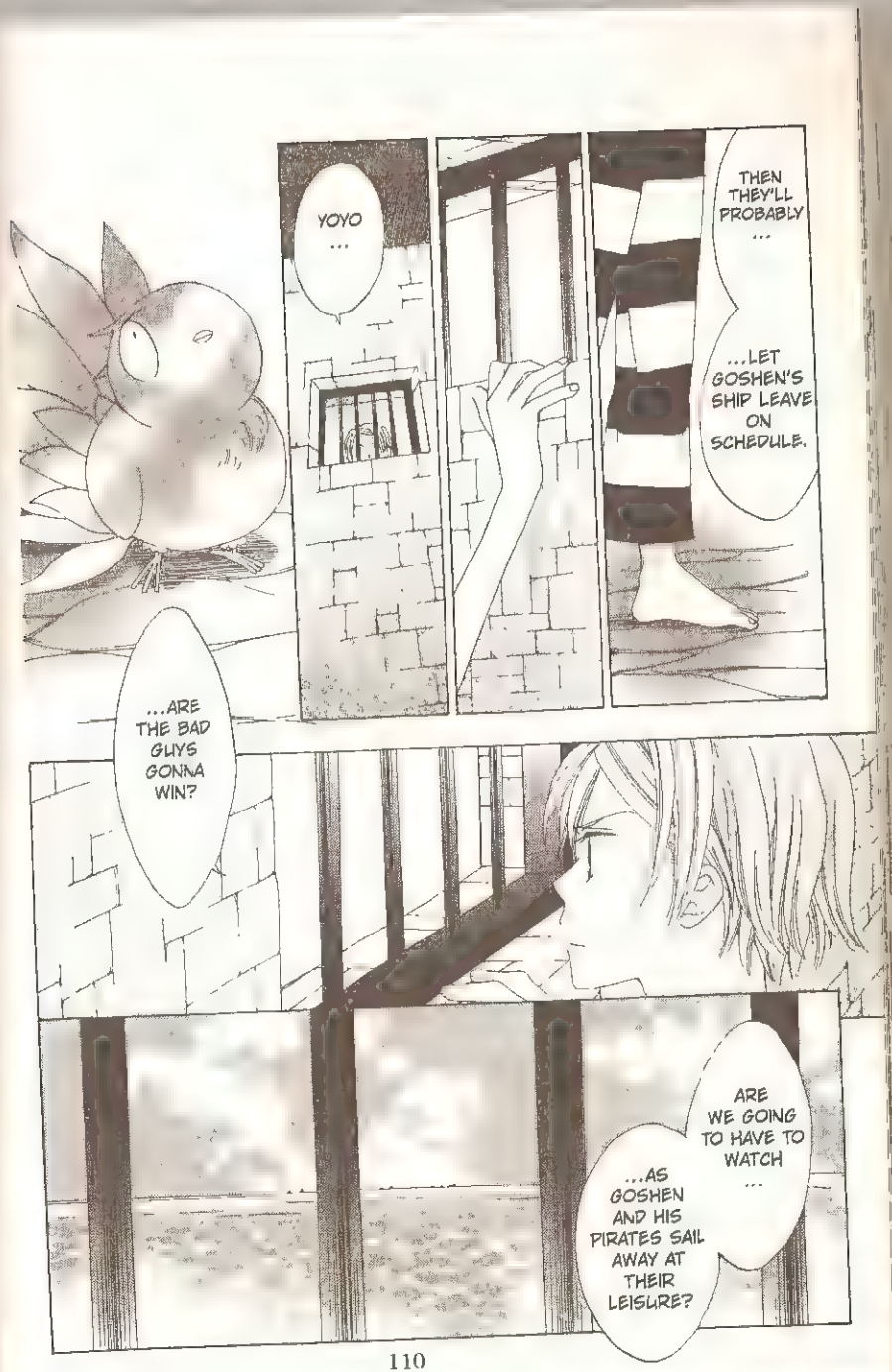
MMM..
MMM..
MMM..
WHERE ARE THE BIRDS?

AS I TOLD YOU, WE ARE COVERING THAT ANGLE.
...OR AT LEAST BE ABLE TO CLEAR US OF WRONG-DOING!
IF 30 WERE TAKEN, THE REST SHOULD BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE CRIMINAL ...
A- ANYWAY, FOCUS ON THE BIRDS!
SO IF THEY'RE NOT FOUND BY TOMORROW MORNING ...
... GOSHEN WINS.
.....

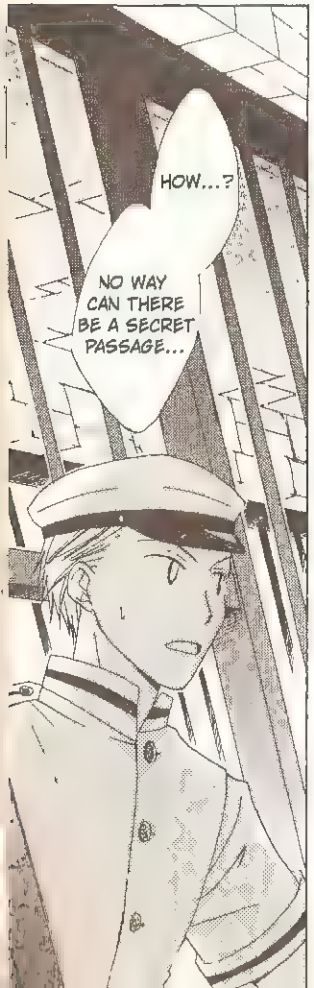

YAWN
OH, THE BIRDS ...
NO.
...MM?
THE...
...BIRDS!
NOT YET.
THE SEARCH WENT ON ALL NIGHT, BUT TURNED UP NOTHING.

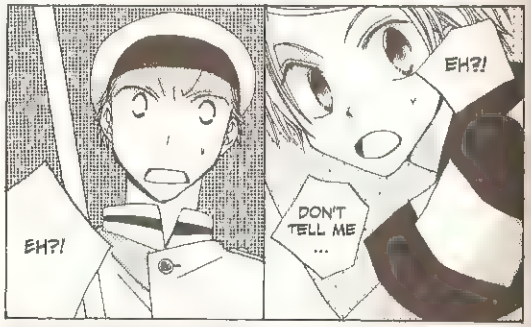
MORNING ...
RUSTLE...
SWISH
MORNING?!
ALREADY?!
HAVE THE BIRDS BEEN FOUND ?!
ZZZ
OFFICER! OFFICER!
EXCUSE ME!


AND BRANDED AS CRIMINALS NO LESS ...
... POWERLESS TO DO ANYTHING BUT GAZE OUT THIS LITTLE WINDOW ... ... DAY AND NIGHT ...
SWII... HISSH!
... DAY ...
... NIGHT.
THAT ISLET...IT WASN'T THERE AT NIGHT..
...WHICH IS WHEN ALL THE POLICE BOATS WERE CONDUCTING THEIR INVESTIGATION.

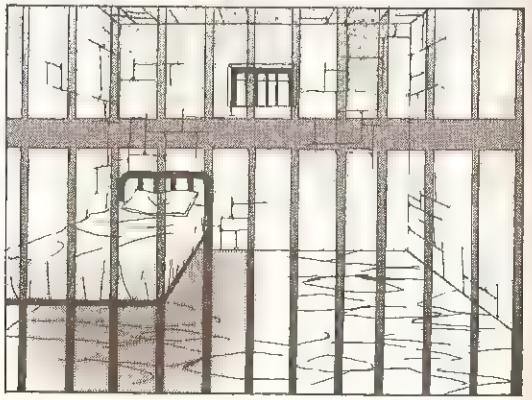

YOYO ...
THEN THEY'LL PROBABLY ...
...LET GOSHEN'S SHIP LEAVE ON SCHEDULE.
...ARE THE BAD GUYS GONNA WIN?
ARE WE GOING TO HAVE TO WATCH ...
...AS GOSHEN AND HIS PIRATES SAIL AWAY AT THEIR LEISURE?

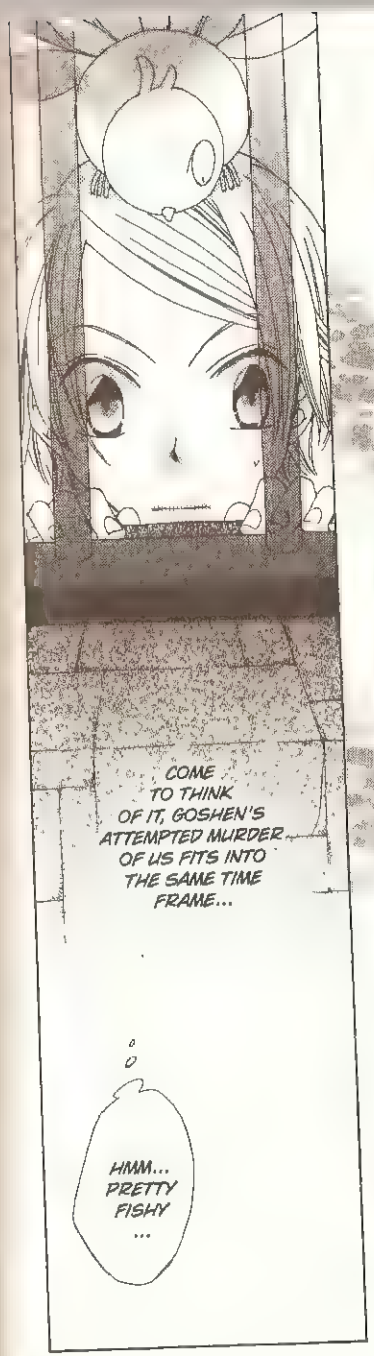
IS THERE A SECRET PASSAGE IN THERE?
WHAT'S THIS?
RATTLE

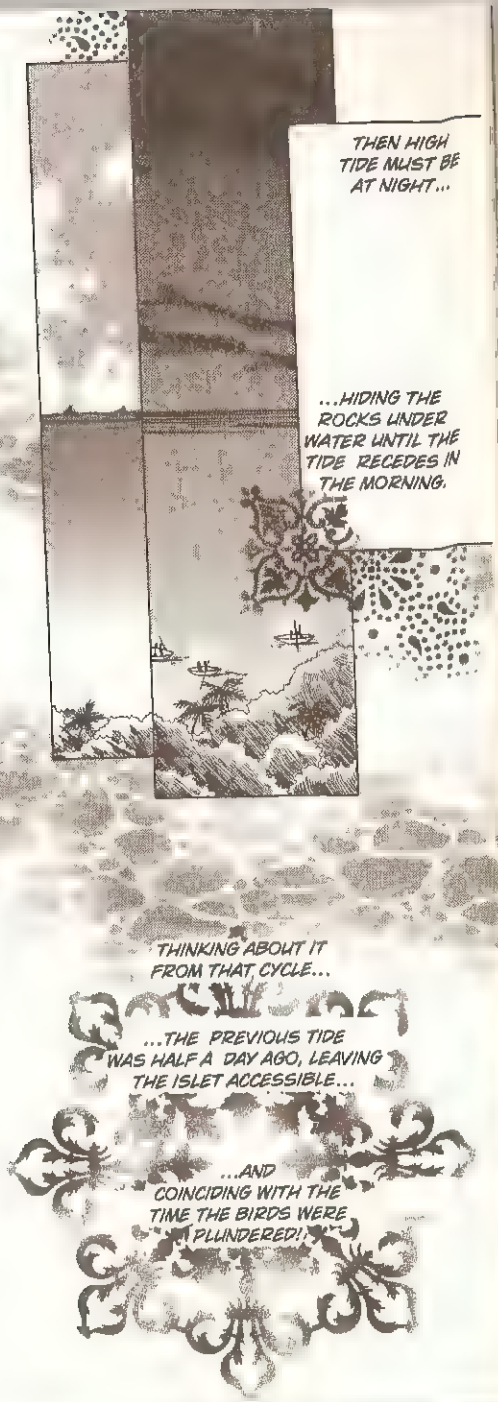

HOW...?
NO WAY CAN THERE BE A SECRET PASSAGE...


EH?!
EH?!
DON'T TELL ME ...

DOCTOR, YOU ESCAPED WITHOUT ME?!
RIDICULOUS!

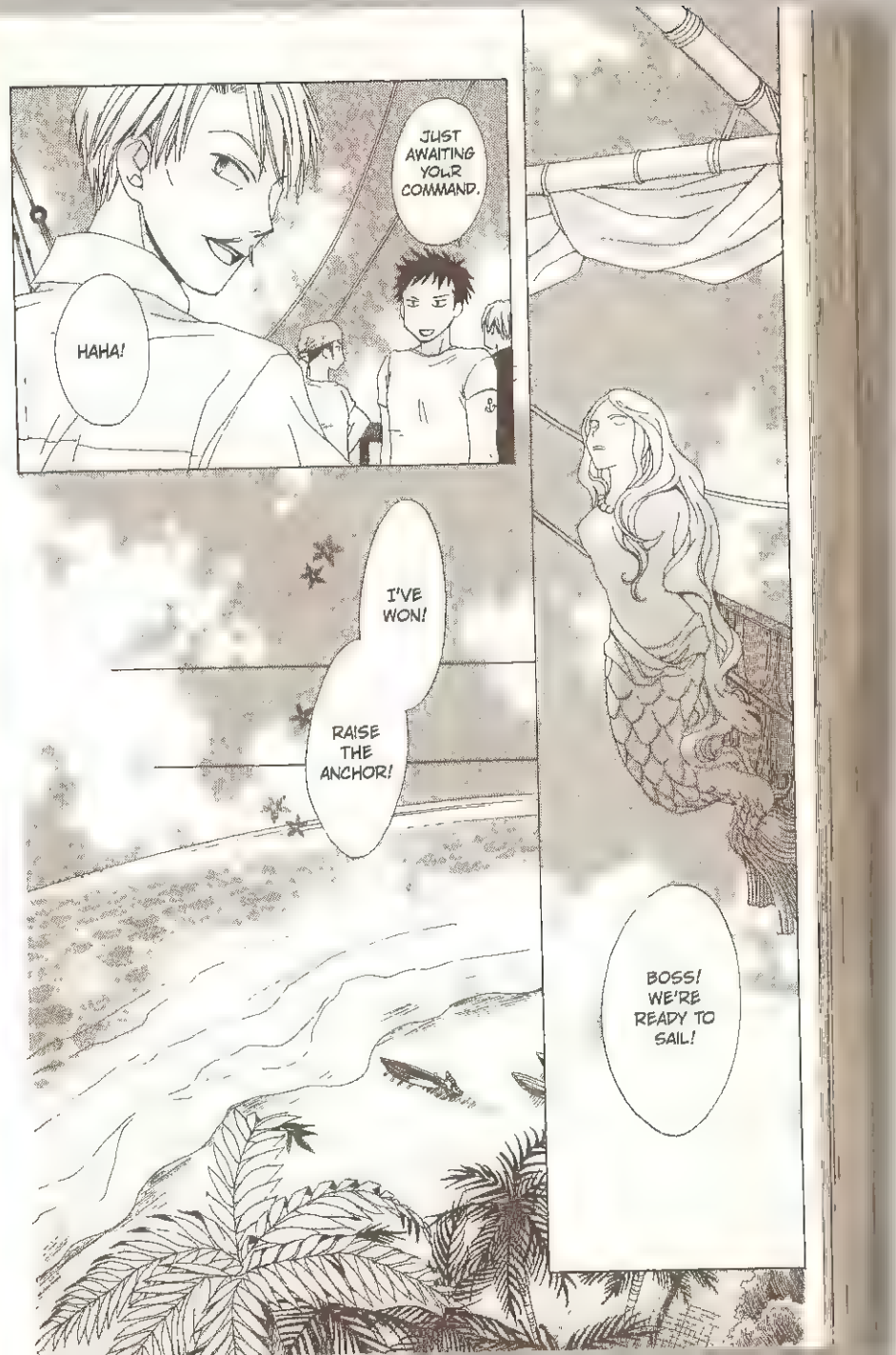



COME TO THINK OF IT, GOSHEN'S ATTEMPTED MURDER OF US FITS INTO THE SAME TIME FRAME...
HMM... PRETTY FISHY ...


THEN HIGH TIDE MUST BE AT NIGHT...
...HIDING THE ROCKS UNDER WATER UNTIL THE TIDE RECEDES IN THE MORNING.
THINKING ABOUT IT FROM THAT CYCLE...
...THE PREVIOUS TIDE WAS HALF A DAY AGO, LEAVING THE ISLET ACCESSIBLE...
...AND COINCIDING WITH THE TIME THE BIRDS WERE PLUNDERED!

SQUEAK
I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT COMMITTING MY FIRST CRIME.
.....
RATTLE RATTLE
CLICK
ONE THING I'M SURE OF, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO SELL MY OLGA!
AND IT SEEMS SILLY TO JUST STAY HERE AND WAVE GOODBYE FROM THE WINDOW!
BUT THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE, NOT WHEN GOSHEN'S SHIP IS ABOUT TO SAIL.
GRIN
NOT WHEN I'VE FIGURED OUT THEIR HIDING PLACE!
AH.
SO HAVE I!
WHAT?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAK
UNH!
FWUMP!
FLUTTER...
JINGLE
YOU'RE RIGHT, THERE ISN'T.
JUST USING THE OLD "SECRET COLORS" TECHNIQUE TO BORROW A COLOR FROM WHATEVER I TOUCH.
IT DOESN'T ONLY WORK WITH BIRDS, REMEMBER.
...AND USED IT AS A "CLOAK OF INVISIBILITY."
I PAINTED THE BEDSHEET THE COLOR OF THE BRICK WALL ...

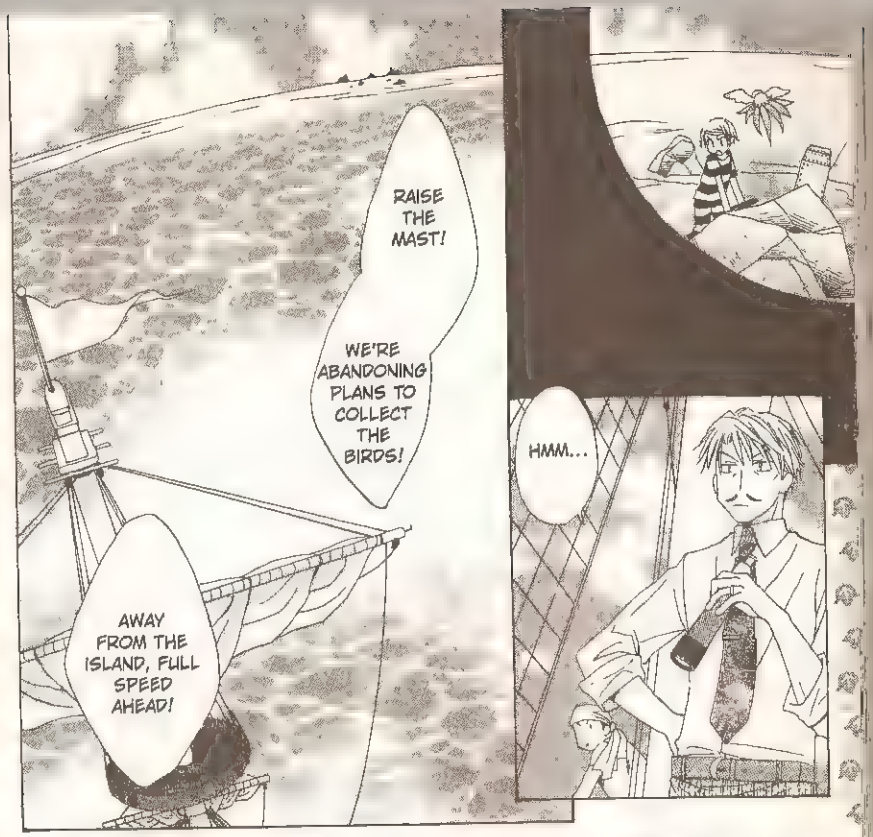
YOU TWO!
HALT!
SPLASH
HEY!
WAIT!
SPLASH
SPLOOSH
DARN IT!
THE TWO SUSPECTS ARE ESCAPING!
GO GET THE LIEUTENANT!
SPLOOSH!

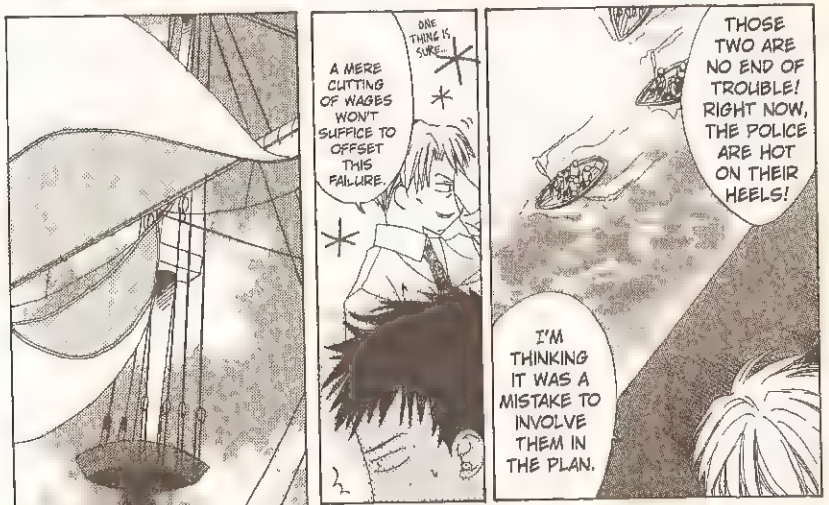

JUST AWAITING YOUR COMMAND.
HAHA!
I'VE WON!
RAISE THE ANCHOR!
BOSS! WE'RE READY TO SAIL!

DR. GUELL! OVER THERE
SPLOOSH!!
IS THAT A SAFE...? IT HAS AN AIR VENT...
I SEE..
ONE OF THE ROCKS OF THAT ISLET IS MANMADE!
SPLISH
SPLISH
PEEP! PEEP!
COO!

NOW, THERE'S ONLY ONE MORE LOAD WE HAVE TO PICK UP.
SPLOOS
WAA
WAA
HOW COULD THIS BLUNDER HAVE BEEN COMMITTED?!
QUICKLY, AFTER THEM!

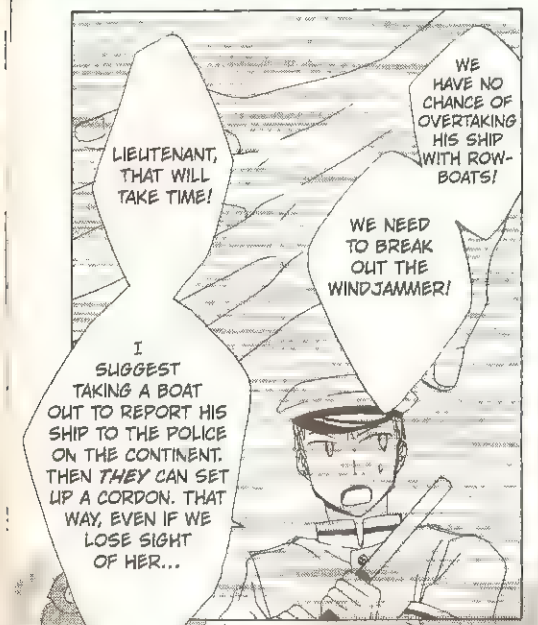
AWK!
FWASH
WHOOSH
GOSHEN!
DRIP DRIP DRIP

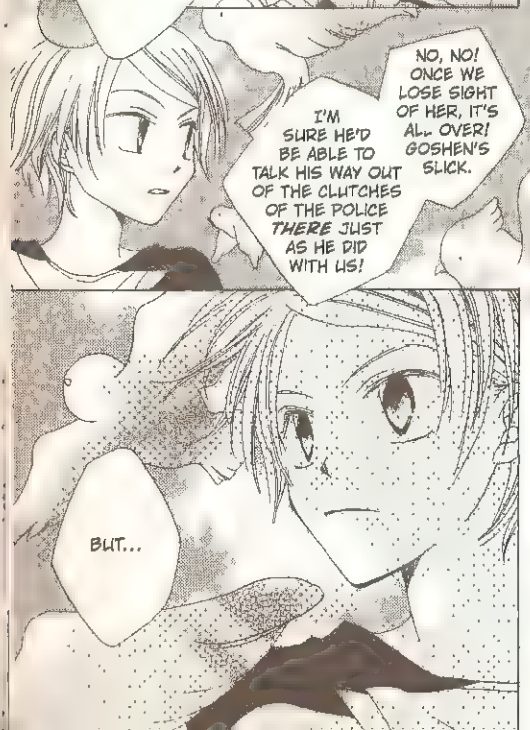

RAISE THE MAST!
WE'RE ABANDONING PLANS TO COLLECT THE BIRDS!
AWAY FROM THE ISLAND, FULL SPEED AHEAD!
HMM...


ONE THING IS SURE...
A MERE CUTTING OF WAGES WON'T SUFFICE TO OFFSET THIS FAILURE.
THOSE TWO ARE NO END OF TROUBLE! RIGHT NOW, THE POLICE ARE HOT ON THEIR HEELS!
I'M THINKING IT WAS A MISTAKE TO INVOLVE THEM IN THE PLAN.

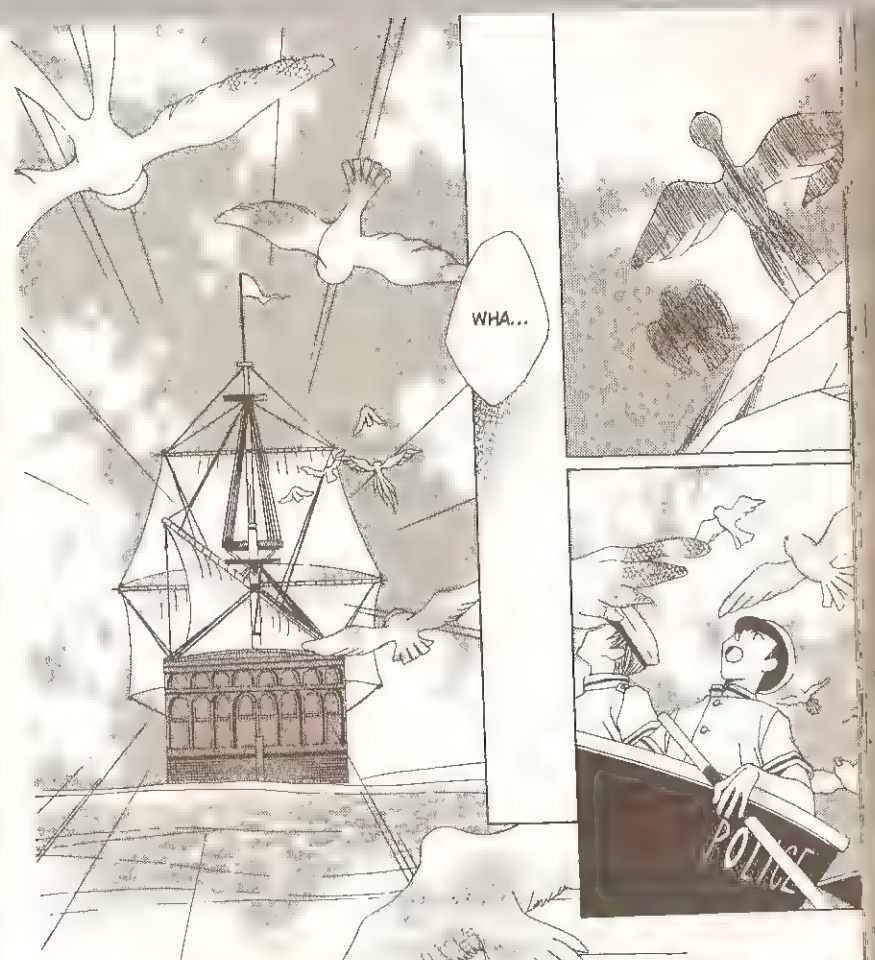
HERE WE ARE, LADS!
HALT, YOU TWO!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY FLEEING LIKE THAT?
AWA
WAA!
WAIT, WE CAN PROVE WE DIDN'T DO IT!
PLACE THEM IN CUSTODY!
YOU'RE ONLY COMPOUNDING YOUR ORIGINAL OFFENSE!
SPIN!
OLGA, YOU KNOW WHO BIRD-NAPPED YOU, DON'T YOU?

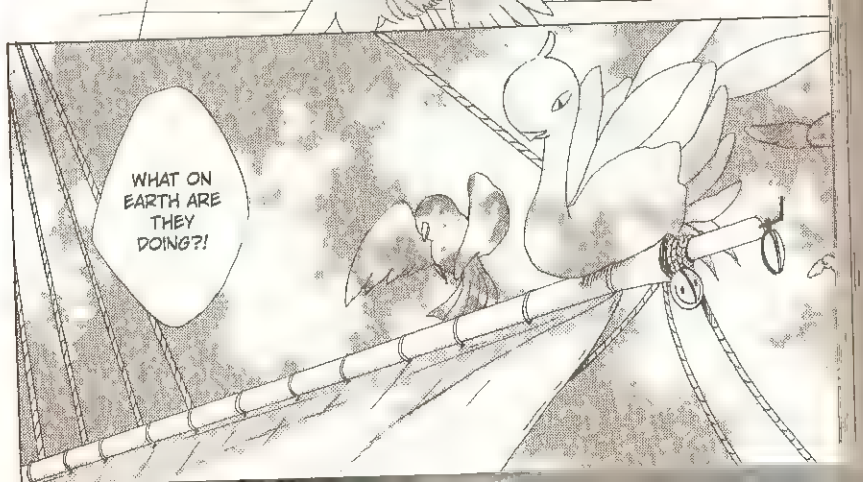
RUMBLE
WE CAN'T LET 'EM GET AWAY!
WE'RE GETTING THE BIRDS BACK...
...BUT NOW WE NEED SOME PAYBACK!
RUMBLE
JNGH!
WHUMP
PEEP!
PEEP!
COO!

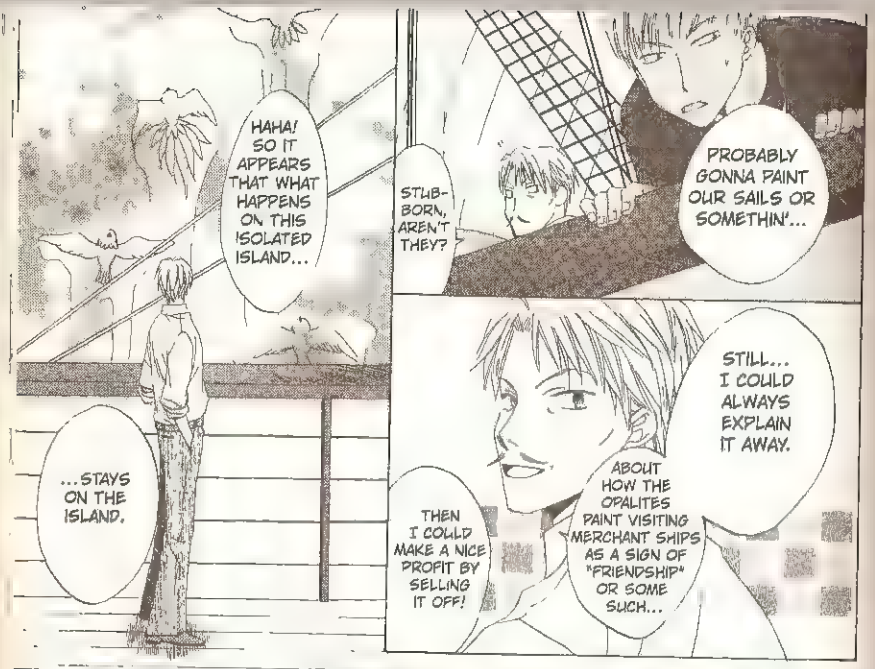

LIEUTENANT, THAT WILL TAKE TIME!
WE HAVE NO CHANCE OF OVERTAKING HIS SHIP WITH ROW-BOATS!
WE NEED TO BREAK OUT THE WINDJAMMER!
I SUGGEST TAKING A BOAT OUT TO REPORT HIS SHIP TO THE POLICE ON THE CONTINENT. THEN *THEY* CAN SET UP A CORDON. THAT WAY, EVEN IF WE LOSE SIGHT OF HER...

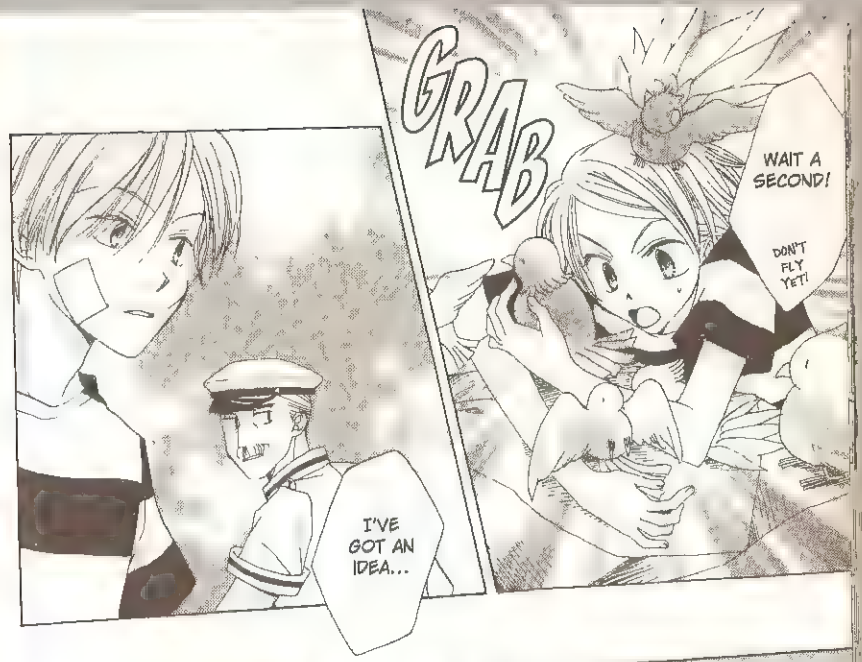

I'M SURE HE'D BE ABLE TO TALK HIS WAY OUT OF THE CLUTCHES OF THE POLICE *THERE* JUST AS HE DID WITH US!
NO, NO! ONCE WE LOSE SIGHT OF HER, IT'S ALL OVER! GOSHEN'S SLICK.
BUT...

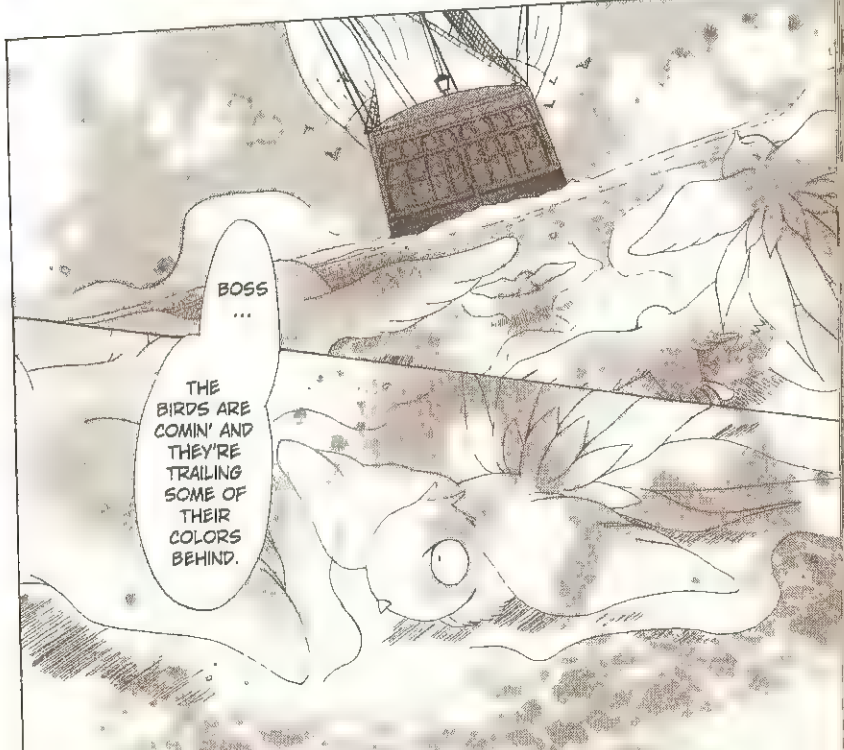
I SEE... SO GOSHEN IS THE THIEF AFTER ALL.

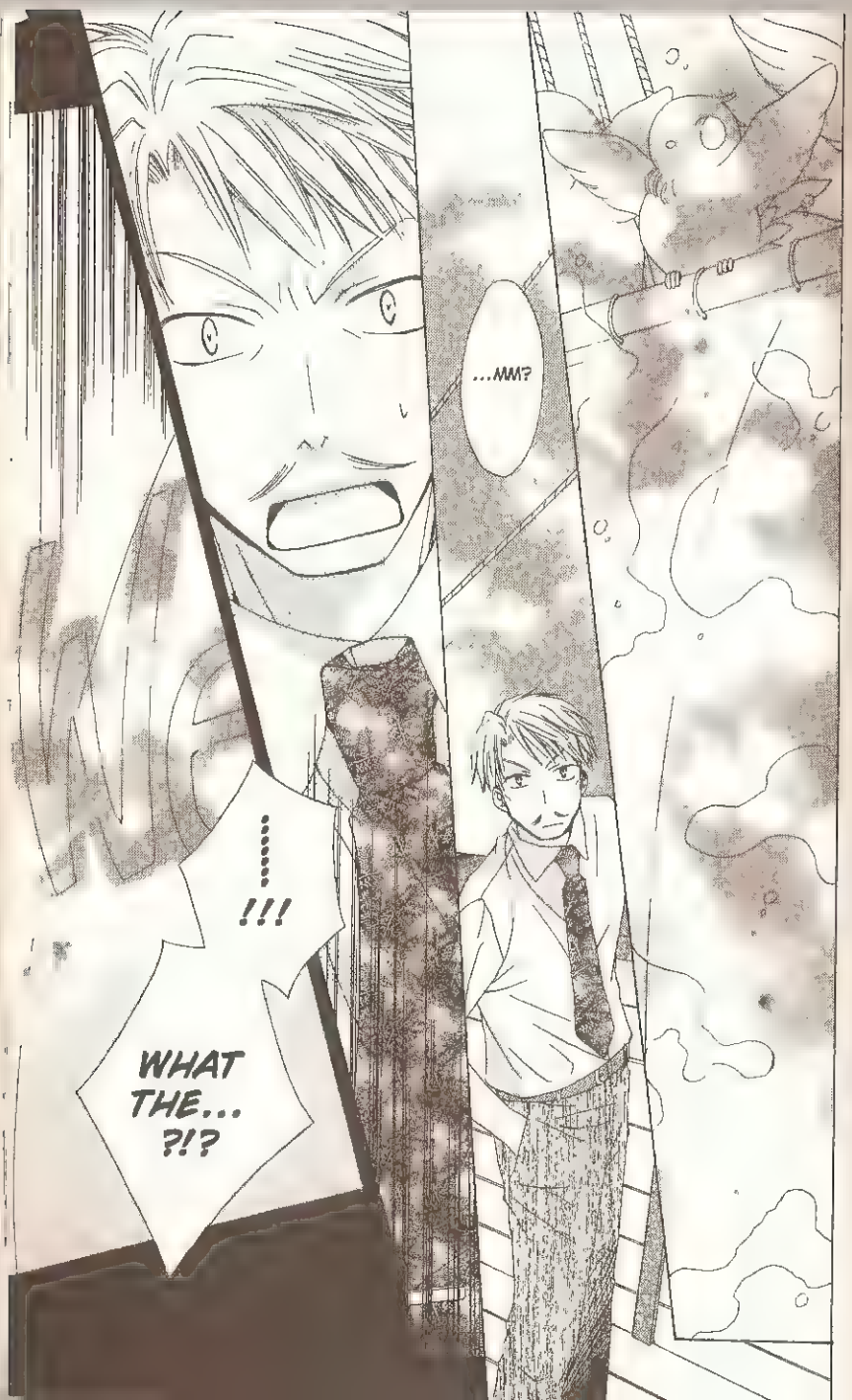

WHA...
POLICE


WHAT ON EARTH ARE THEY DOING?!


HAHA! SO IT APPEARS THAT WHAT HAPPENS ON THIS ISOLATED ISLAND...
...STAYS ON THE ISLAND.
STUBBORN, AREN'T THEY?
PROBABLY GONNA PAINT OUR SAILS OR SOMETHIN'...
STILL... I COULD ALWAYS EXPLAIN IT AWAY.
ABOUT HOW THE OPALITES PAINT VISITING MERCHANT SHIPS AS A SIGN OF "FRIENDSHIP" OR SOME SUCH...
THEN I COULD MAKE A NICE PROFIT BY SELLING IT OFF!

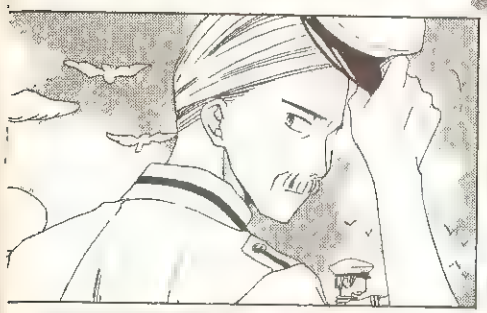

I'VE GOT AN IDEA...
GRAB
WAIT A SECOND!
DON'T FLY YET!

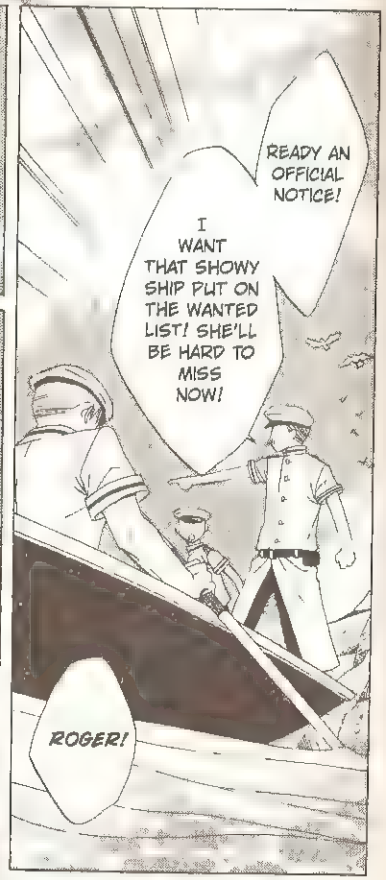

BOSS ...
THE BIRDS ARE COMIN' AND THEY'RE TRAILING SOME OF THEIR COLORS BEHIND.

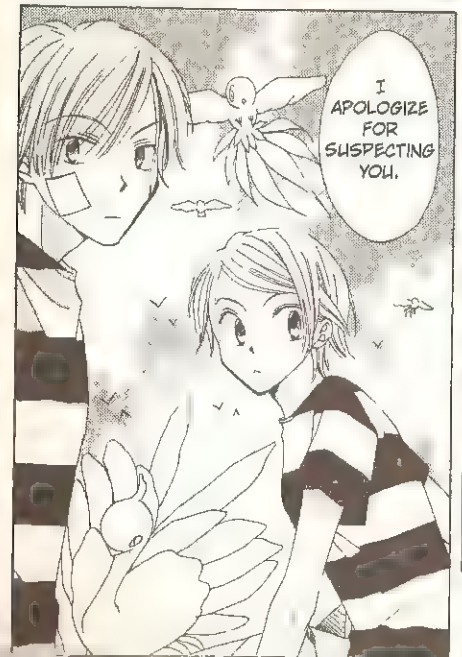

...MM?
!!!
WHAT THE... ?!?

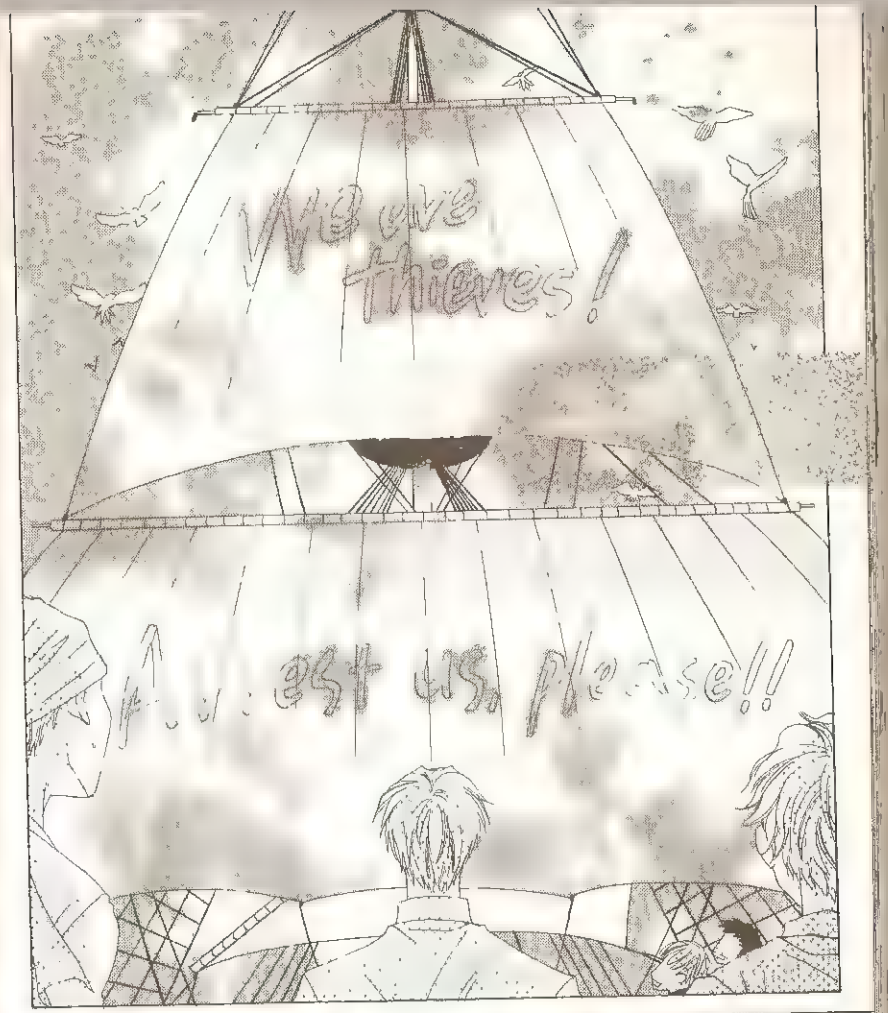
GOSHEN...
...NO MATTER WHERE YOU SAIL...
...YOU'LL ALWAYS BE SHOWING YOUR TRUE COLORS!
SPLASH!

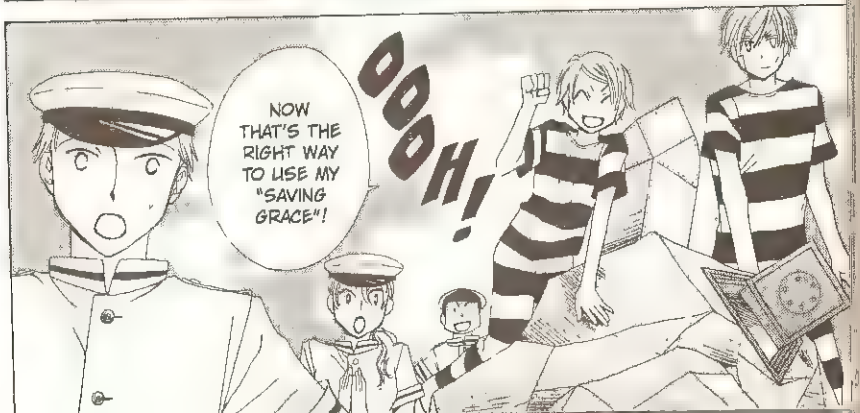
YOU KNOW IT!
A HA HA!
A HA HA!
THEY CAN SAIL THROUGH A TYPHOON OR SCRUB THE SAIL WITH BRUSHES, BUT THAT GRAFFITI'S PERMANENT!
ALTHOUGH THANKS TO THAT, THE BIRDS' FEATHERS ARE "OUT" OF COLOR.
POLICE

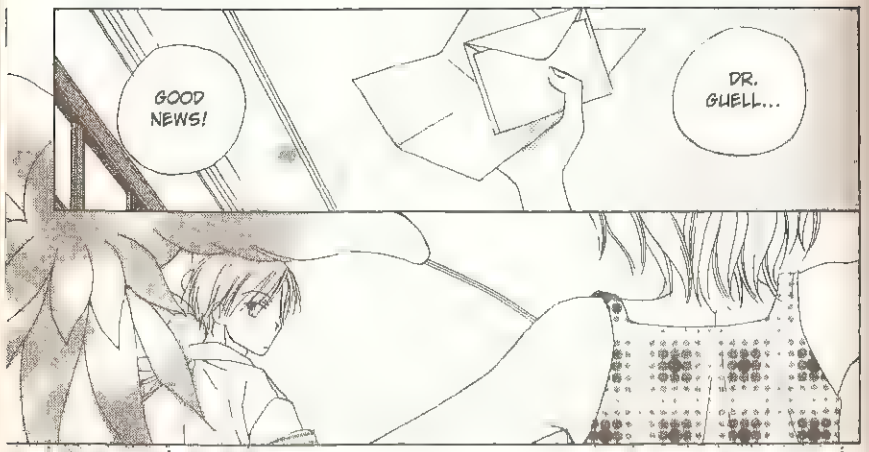



READY AN OFFICIAL NOTICE!
I WANT THAT SHOWY SHIP PUT ON THE WANTED LIST! SHE'LL BE HARD TO MISS NOW!
ROGER!

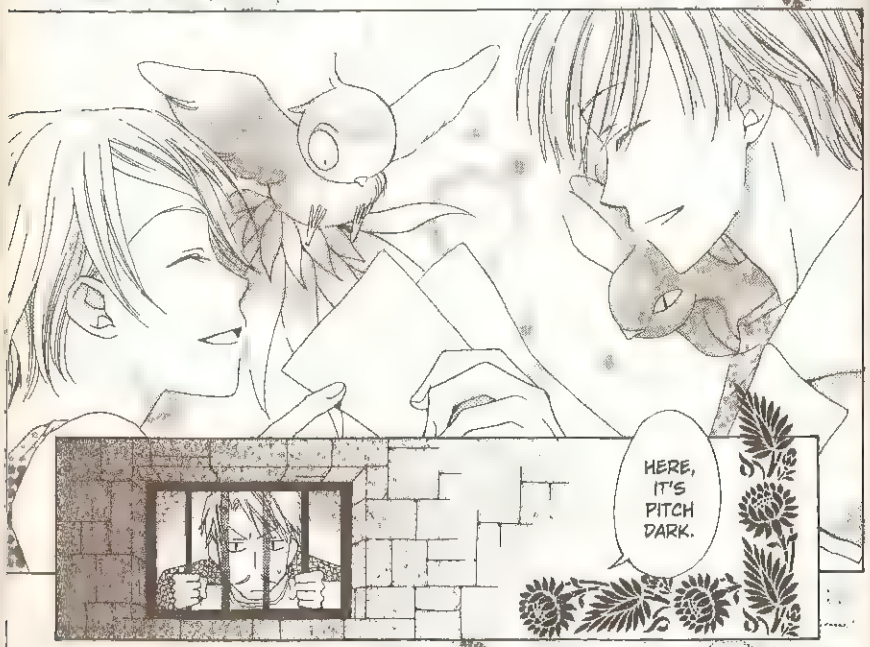

I APOLOGIZE FOR SUSPECTING YOU.


We're thieves!
Let us, Please!!

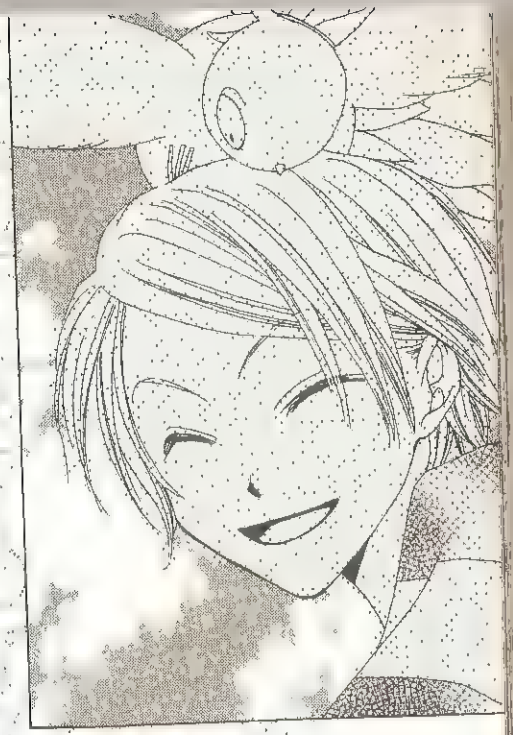

NOW THAT'S THE RIGHT WAY TO USE MY "SAVING GRACE"!
OOOH!



EVERY DAY IS BRILLIANTLY COLORED HERE.



EPISODE 2: THE END

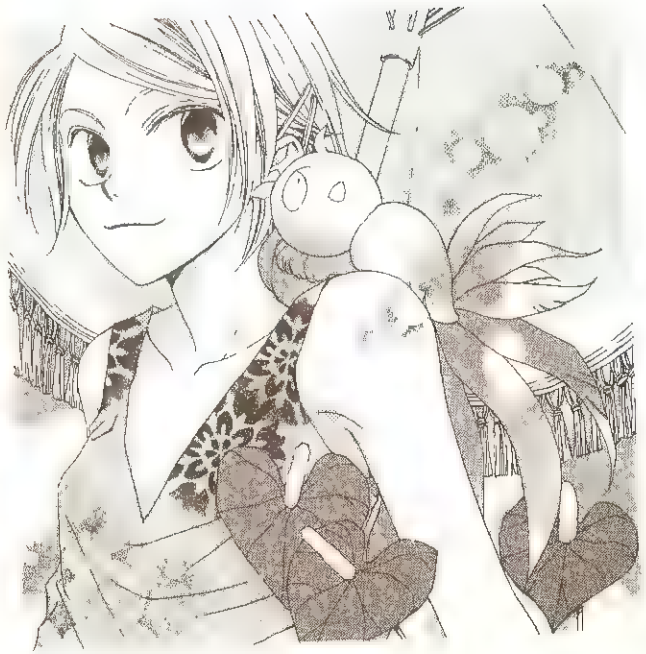


OPAL IS A REMOTE ISLAND IN THE SOUTH SEAS.

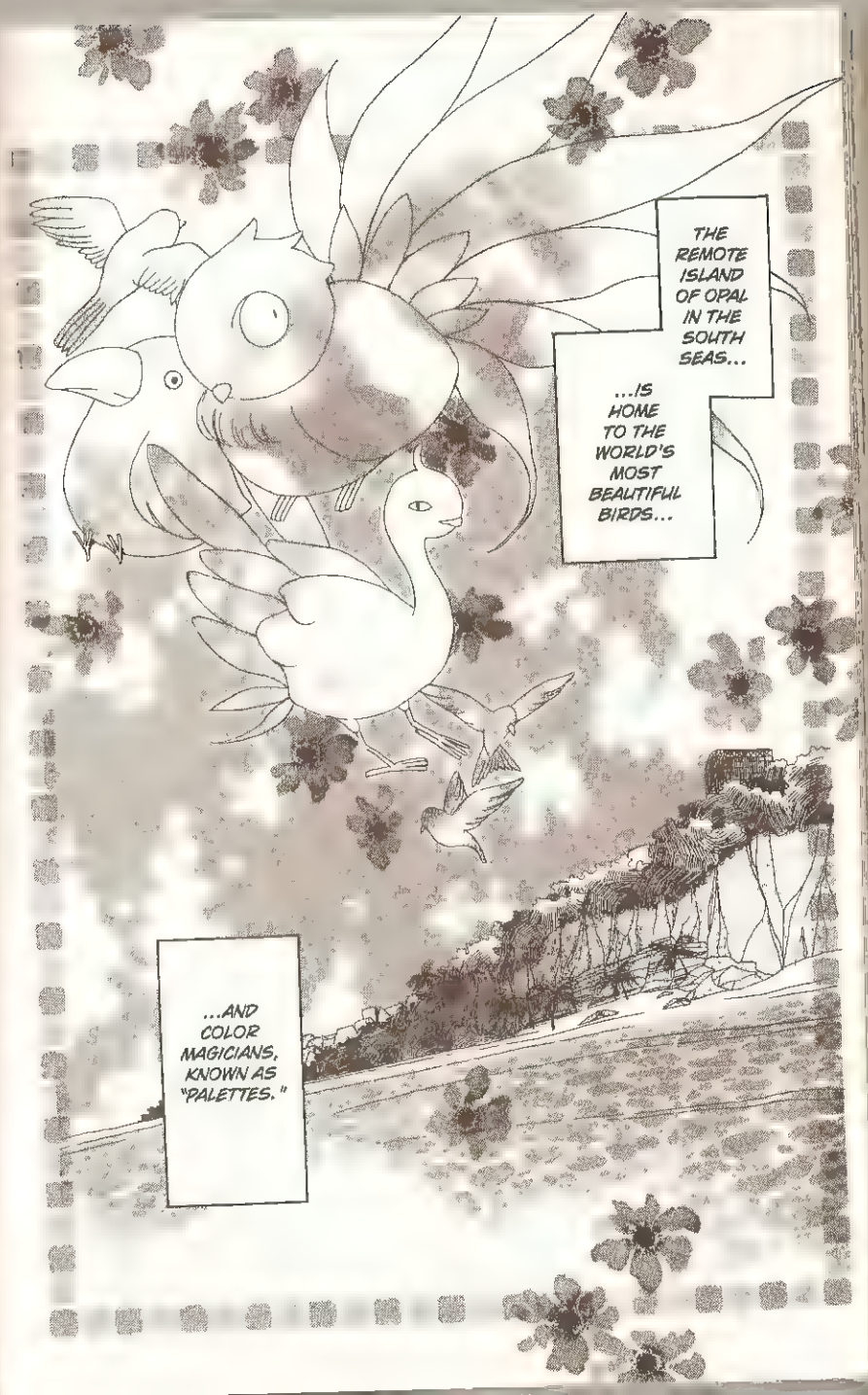
IT'S HOME TO THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BIRDS AND COLOR MAGICIANS, KNOWN AS "PALETTES."

Episode 3
Preview Cut

When I'M drawing Opal, I'M going for an atmosphere and look of England +Bali + Hawaii +Okinawa divided by 4.



TUG
TUG
CELLO, YOU'VE GOT A NIBBLE.
...AND PRODUCE VIBRANTLY COLORED GOODS. IT'S A PROFESSION THAT ALL THE CHILDREN OF OPAL ADMIRE AND YEARN TO BECOME SKILLED IN.
PALETTES ARE SPECIAL ARTISANS WHO CAN BORROW COLORS FROM WHATEVER THEY TOUCH.
PARTNERED WITH THE TOWN'S TREASURED, BRILLIANTLY COLORED BIRDS, THEY TAKE COLORS FROM THE BIRD'S FEATHERS...
SO THAT'S WHY YOU WERE SO QUIET... CAT-NAPPING, HUH?
HAH?
BLINK


THE REMOTE ISLAND OF OPAL IN THE SOUTH SEAS...
...IS HOME TO THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BIRDS...
...AND COLOR MAGICIANS, KNOWN AS "PALETTES."

DR. GUELL IS THE SCHOOL DOCTOR. HE'S TREATED ME MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT.
...A FRESHMAN AT THE PALETTE TRAINING SCHOOL.
MY FRIEND MOUSSELINE IS A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT.
PULL
RIGHT, MORE OR LESS...
I SEE...
IT WOULDN'T BE UNUSUAL FOR HIM TO HAVE A GIRLFRIEND, AFTER ALL ...
I'M CELLO ...
SPLOOSH
THE CLIMATE...
...IS WONDERFUL ALL YEAR ROUND IN OPAL...
...BUT THIS SEASON, WITH ITS EXTRAVAGANT NUMBER OF FLOWERS IN BLOOM, IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ALL.
PULL

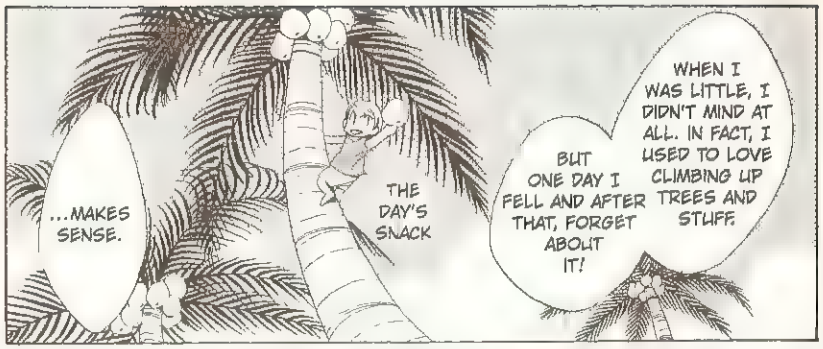
IT'S A WHISPER!
WHAT IS THIS?
FEELS LIKE...
HELLO, DR. GUELL.
HI!
GOOD DAY, MOUSSE.
WHOA!
YOU'RE RIGHT!
TUG
TUG
I GOT ONE!
NO... SOMETHING'S COME UP. NOTHING IMPORTANT ...
ARE YOU OUT SHOPPING?
IT'S NOT OFTEN THAT WE SEE YOU ON A SUNDAY OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL GROUNDS.
SQUEEZE
THUMP THUMP
GIRL-FRIEND...
HIS GIRLFRIEND, YOU THINK?
MAYBE YOU'RE MEETING SOMEONE?

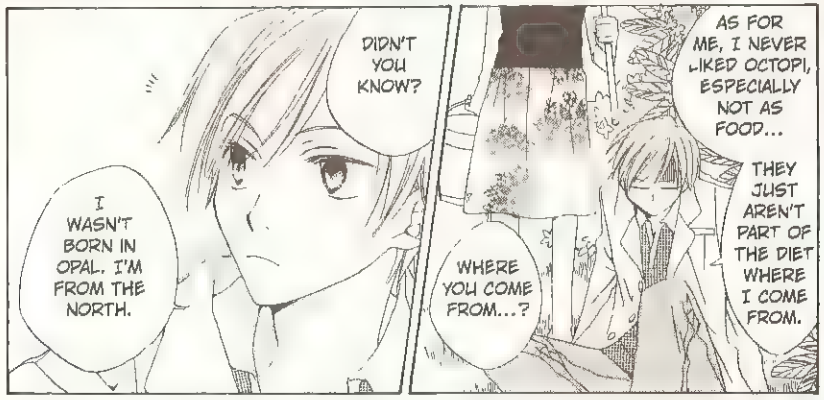
DOCTOR ...
THE OCTOPUS IS GONE NOW. IS IT ALL RIGHT IF I COME OVER THERE?
I WASHED MY HANDS TOO.
...GO AHEAD.
CLATTER
SKITTER
PA
LE
WELL ...
I'M GONNA GO ON AHEAD AND DELIVER OUR CATCH TO THE HOUSEMOTHER BEFORE IT GOES BAD.
OKAY!
TREMBLE
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN'T STAND?
I DON'T LIKE HEIGHTS!
WHAT'S THAT FACE FOR? ARE YOU THAT SURPRISED?
SO YOU'RE NOT TOO FOND OF OCTOPI, HUH?
I HATE THE WAY THEY MOVE. I HATE THE TEXTURE OF THEIR FLESH. AND MOST OF ALL, I HATE THEIR "SUCTION CUPS"!
COULDN'T STOP SHIVERING WHEN I HEARD THAT IF ONE OF THEIR ARMS GETS CUTS OFF, A NEW ONE GROWS BACK!! BRRR!
IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT HE'D GO OUT ON A DATE!
IT'S CUTE...AND TASTY-LOOKING! ♡
HERE, DOCTOR, WHY DON'T YOU GIVE THIS AS A GIFT TO WHOEVER YOU'RE GONNA MEET? I'M SURE SHE'D BE PLEASED!
YAY, I CAUGHT AN OCTOPUS!
WRIGGLE
WRIGGLE
AH...
DOCTOR GUELL?!
EH?!
BONK
OW!
ARE YOU OKAY...?

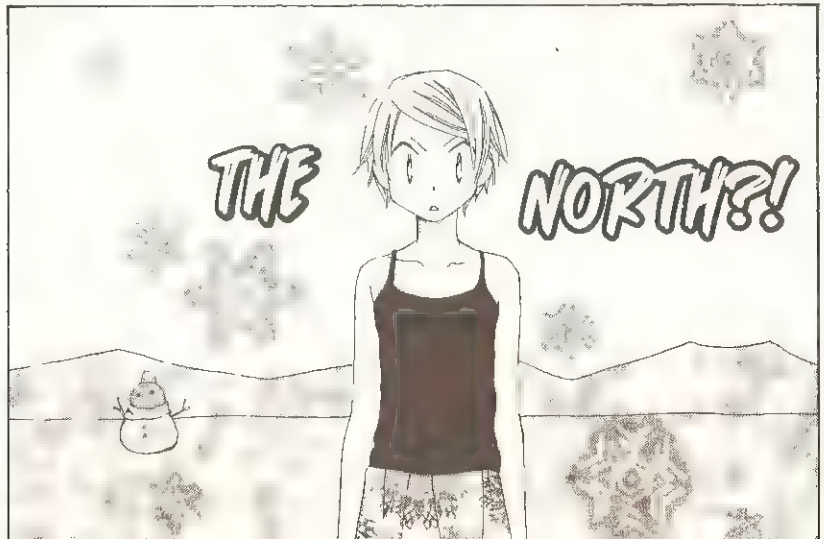
SPEAKING OF COLORS...

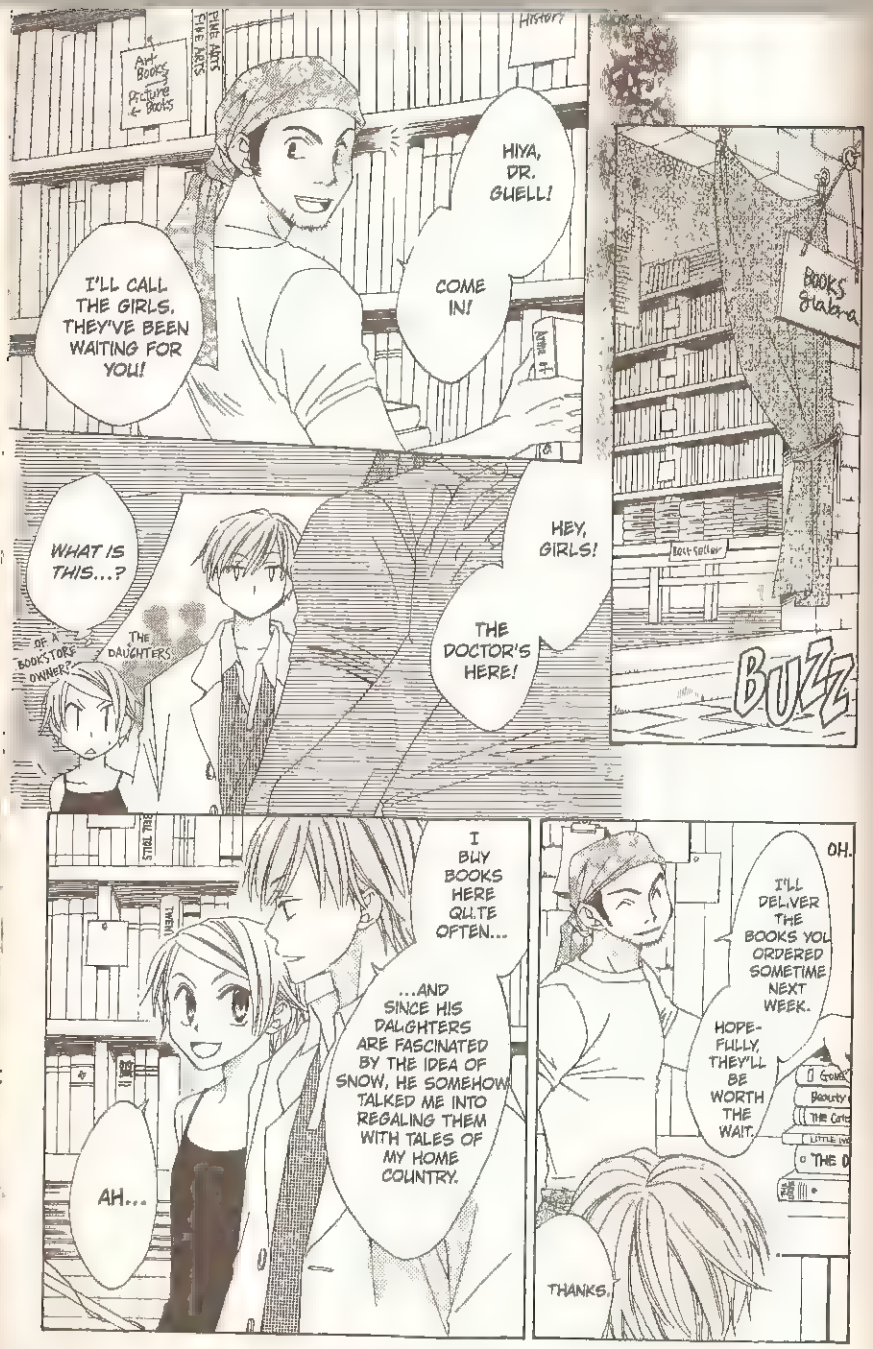
I'M GROPING IN THE DARK WHEN IT COMES TO PUTTING COLOR IN THE MANUSCRIPT. IT'S REALLY DIFFICULT. IT'S LIKE I'VE GOT A LIMITED INNER "PALETTE," WHERE I CAN ONLY CHOOSE A SET NUMBER OF COLORS, RESULTING IN ONLY A FEW VARIATIONS OF "PAINT JOBS." I KNOW IT'D BE MUCH MORE FUN IF I COULD DRAW A VARIETY OF MOODS WITH A WHOLE BUNCH OF COLORS. ALTHOUGH I GUESS MY PROBLEM ISN'T JUST ABOUT COLORS. WHEN I OPEN MY BUREAU DRAWER AND SEE CLOTHES WITH ALMOST ALL OF THE SAME TONES, I REALIZE THAT I DON'T HAVE MUCH OF A "SELECTIONAL SENSE."

I KNOW IT'S UNUSUAL.
OPAL IS SO REMOTE THAT ALMOST EVERYONE WHO LIVES HERE IS NATIVE TO THE ISLAND.
HAD NO IDEA!
EH? REALLY?
I'D LOVE TO SEE THAT...
I WISH IT SNOWED IN OPAL.
♡
SWOOH...
I DON'T! SNOW HERE WOULD PROBABLY BE THE SIGN OF A NEW ICE AGE!
A COUNTRY UP NORTH...
SO IT SNOWS THERE?! I HEARD SNOW'S WHITE AND COLD!
AND IF IT FALLS FOR A LONG TIME, EVERYTHING ON THE GROUND GETS COVERED.
YOU LOOK OUT THE WINDOW AND JUST SEE PURE WHITE.
YEP.

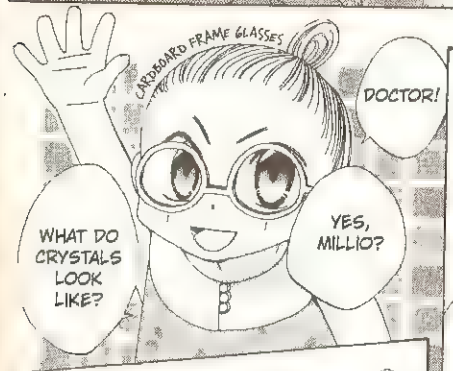

...MAKES SENSE.
THE DAY'S SNACK
BUT ONE DAY I FELL AND AFTER THAT, FORGET ABOUT IT!
WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I DIDN'T MIND AT ALL. IN FACT, I USED TO LOVE CLIMBING UP TREES AND STUFF.


I WASN'T BORN IN OPAL. I'M FROM THE NORTH.
DIDN'T YOU KNOW?
WHERE YOU COME FROM...?
AS FOR ME, I NEVER LIKED OCTOPI, ESPECIALLY NOT AS FOOD...
THEY JUST AREN'T PART OF THE DIET WHERE I COME FROM.




Art Books
Picture Books
FINE ARTS
HISTORY
HIYA, DR. GUELL!
COME IN!
I'LL CALL THE GIRLS. THEY'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!
BOOKS Otakara
Book Cellar
BUZZ
HEY, GIRLS!
THE DOCTOR'S HERE!
WHAT IS THIS...?
OF A BOOKSTORE OWNER?
THE DAUGHTERS
STILL LIFE
VISUAL
I BUY BOOKS HERE QUITE OFTEN...
...AND SINCE HIS DAUGHTERS ARE FASCINATED BY THE IDEA OF SNOW, HE SOMEHOW TALKED ME INTO REGALING THEM WITH TALES OF MY HOME COUNTRY.
AH...
OH.
I'LL DELIVER THE BOOKS YOU ORDERED SOMETIME NEXT WEEK.
HOPEFULLY, THEY'LL BE WORTH THE WAIT.
THANKS.

THAT'S RIGHT. HIS GIRLFRIEND ...
I GUESS I'D BETTER GET GOING.
WELL...
RUSTLE
WHY DON'T YOU TAG ALONG?
BUZZ
BUZZ
STRATEGICALLY PLACED
pencil sold off
eraser sold off


CARDBOARD FRAME GLASSES
DOCTOR!
WHAT DO CRYSTALS LOOK LIKE?
YES, MILLIO?

LET ME BORROW A PENCIL
...SOMETIMES SNOW CRYSTALS ARE CALLED "SNOW FLOWERS."
WELL, WHERE I'M FROM...

THERE ARE MANY PATTERNS, REALLY...
SOME ARE STAR SHAPED...
SOME LOOK LIKE A FAN...

THERE ARE SMALL DROPLETS OF WATER IN THE AIR, YOU SEE.
AND IF THEY GET COLD, THEY HARDEN INTO CRYSTALS.
WHEN MANY CRYSTALS GATHER TOGETHER, THEY BECOME HEAVY AND FALL TO THE EARTH, AS SNOW.
OH-HO...
THOSE GLASSES ARE JUST FOR SHOW...

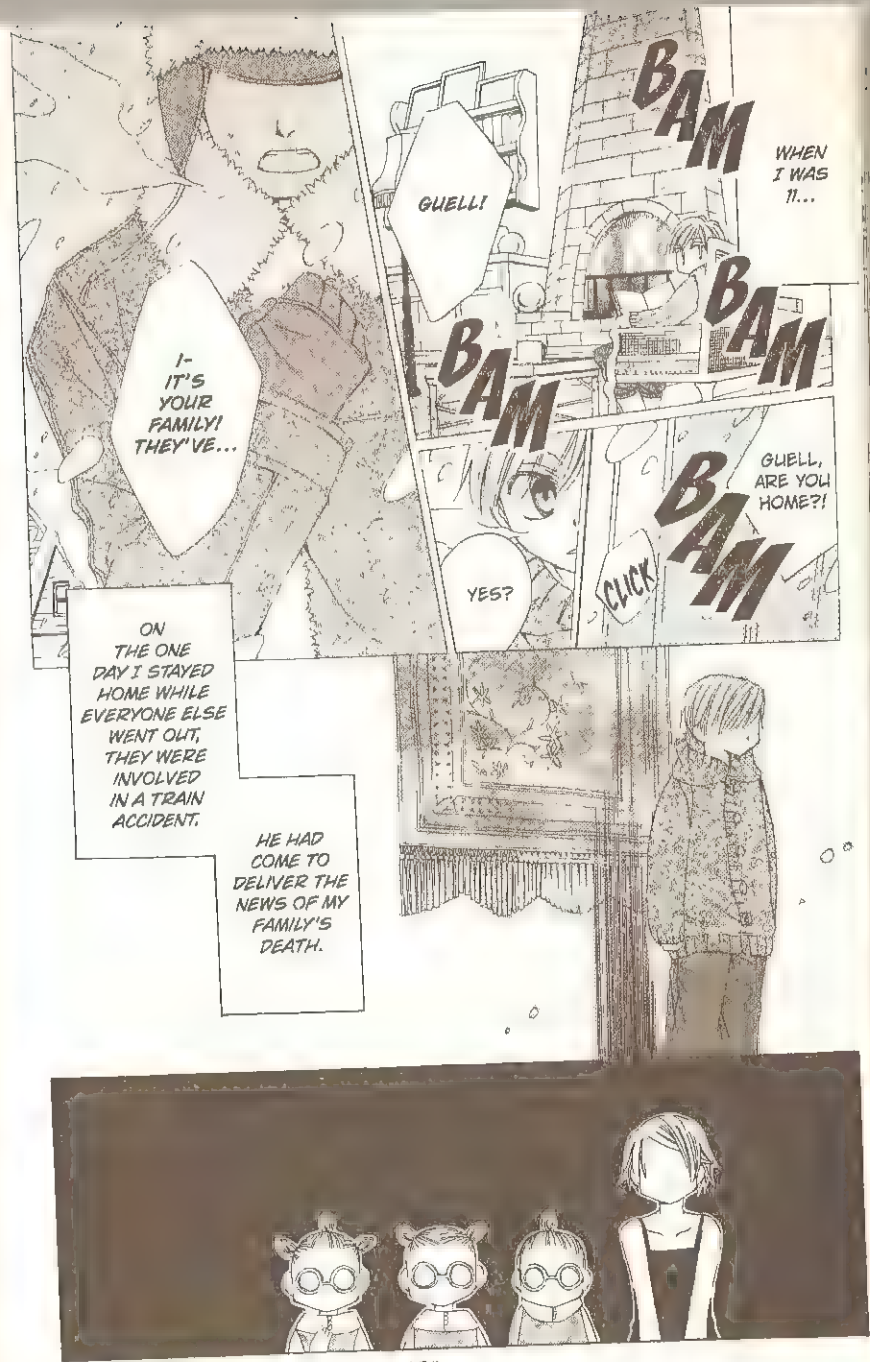
HIYA, DR. GUELL! WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?!?
I'M BILLIO!
AND I'M TRILLIO!
BUT I DON'T GET WHAT I'M DOING HERE...
STEP
STEP
STEP
STEP
STEP
I'M MILLIO!
WHO'S SHE?
TRIPLETS!
TRI...
HIYA!

SMOOTHLY
THIS IS CE.LO.
MY ASSISTANT.

I WARN YOU, IT'S A BORING STORY...
IN MY OLD HOUSE...
WE ALL LOVED THE TAPESTRY. IT WAS THE CENTERPIECE OF OUR WHOLE HOUSE.
...WE HAD A TAPESTRY THAT HAD BEEN PAINTED BY A PALETTE.
IT HAD BEEN SENT TO US BY A GOOD FRIEND OF MY PARENTS WHO'D IMMIGRATED TO OPAL.

TH-THAT'S BEAUTIFUL ...!!
WHY DID YOU COME TO OPAL AND BECOME A PALETTE?
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT TOO, DOCTOR.
...BUT BASICALLY, THEY'RE ALL HEXAGONAL.
WE CALL THE STAR-SHAPED ONES "STAR FLOWERS".
THROB
DOCTOR!
DO YOU LIKE SNOW?
YES, BILLIO?
OOH! DOCTOR!
TRILLIO?
ACTUALLY, I...
I DON'T KNOW.
WHAT ?!

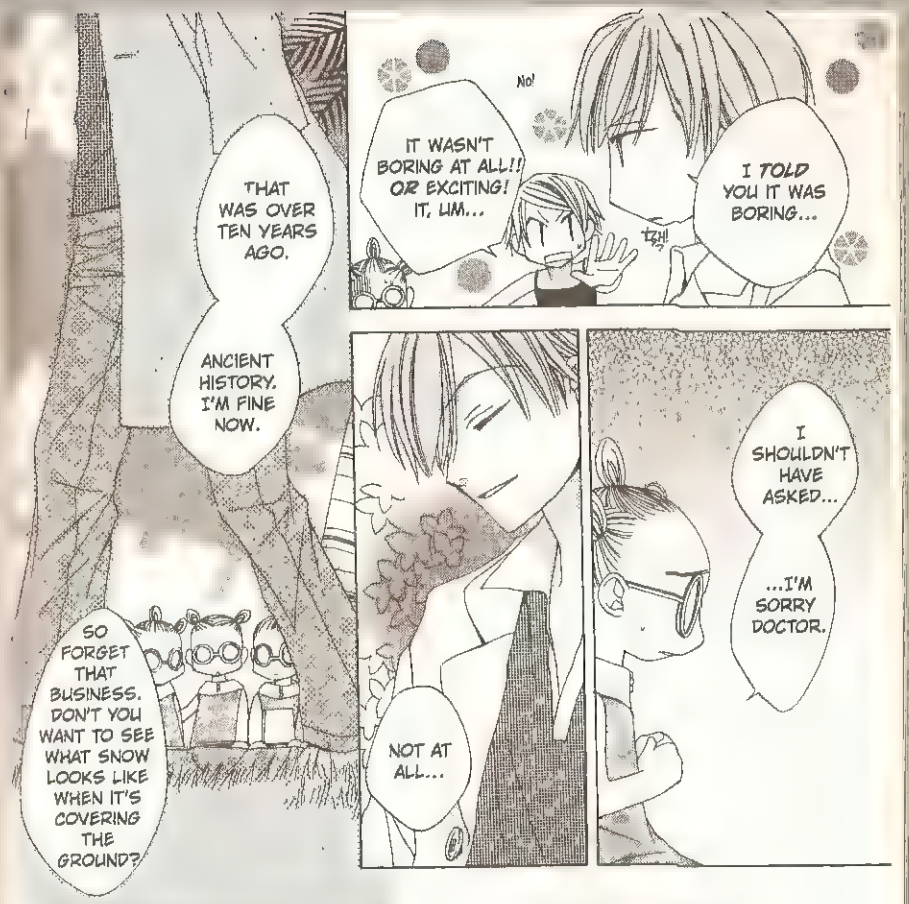
IT MAY BE A GOOD IDEA FOR YOU TO HAVE A CHANGE OF SCENERY.
HE'S LIKE THAT EVERY DAY, CRADLING THAT WALL-HANGING WITH A VACANT LOOK ON HIS FACE.
HE'S MY OWN NEPHEW, BUT I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HIM...
ONLY THE TAPESTRY AND I WERE LEFT BEHIND IN THE HOUSE...
I HAVE AN IDEA. WHO WAS IT THAT SENT THE TAPESTRY?
A SHIP TICKET...?
MY RELATIVES HAD MADE ARRANGE-MENTS...
...FOR ME TO LIVE IN OPAL, WITH THE FRIEND OF MY PARENTS. AND SO, HERE I AM.
.....

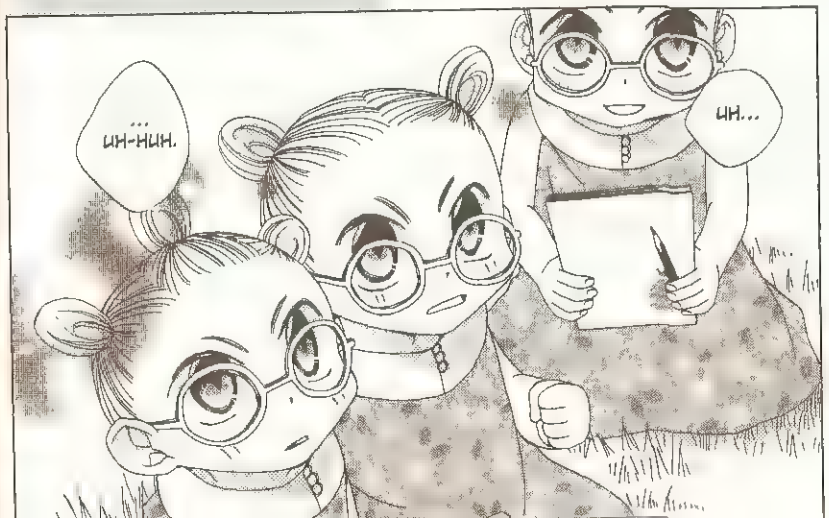

BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
WHEN I WAS 11...
GUELL!
I- IT'S YOUR FAMILY! THEY'VE...
GUELL, ARE YOU HOME?!
YES?
CLICK
ON THE ONE DAY I STAYED HOME WHILE EVERYONE ELSE WENT OUT, THEY WERE INVOLVED IN A TRAIN ACCIDENT.
HE HAD COME TO DELIVER THE NEWS OF MY FAMILY'S DEATH.

7

SPEAKING OF TRAINING SCHOOLS...

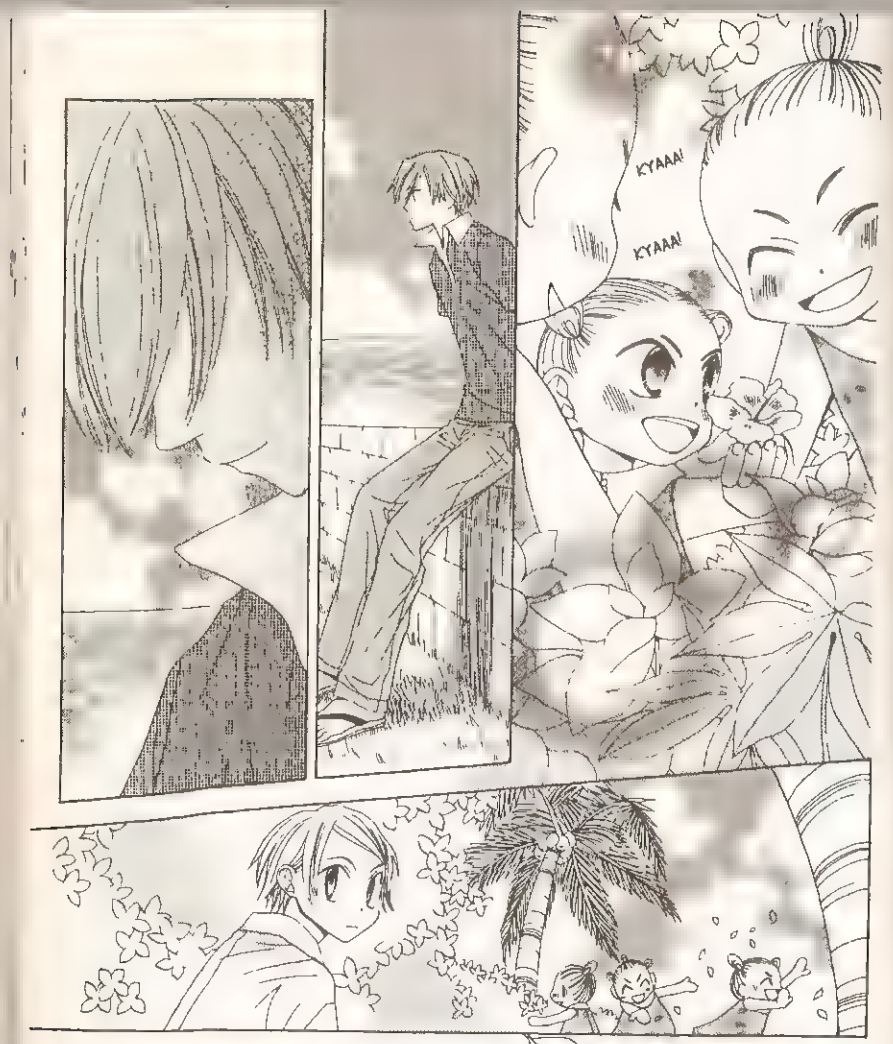
I THINK THE ONLY TRAINING SCHOOL I'VE BEEN TO IS DRIVER'S SCHOOL. I ONLY KNOW HOW TO DRIVE AN AUTOMATIC BUT I DO HAVE A REGULAR DRIVER'S LICENSE, ANYWAY. THAT BEING SAID, I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO INTEREST IN CARS. I CAN'T EVEN DISTINGUISH BETWEEN TYPES OF CARS. I DON'T EVEN LIKE DRIVING. ONCE IN A WHILE, I TAKE OUT MY PARENTS' CAR, BUT DRIVE AROUND THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY. WHEN I SEE LUXURY CARS, I IMAGINE HOW NICE IT MIGHT BE IF I HAD ONE OF MY OWN, BUT THAT'S OVERRIDDEN BY THE SENSE THAT I WOULDN'T EVEN MIND HAVING A CAR LIKE DETECTIVE COLUMBO, AS LONG AS IT RAN. AH, BUT THEN THE AIR CONDITIONER WOULDN'T WORK.

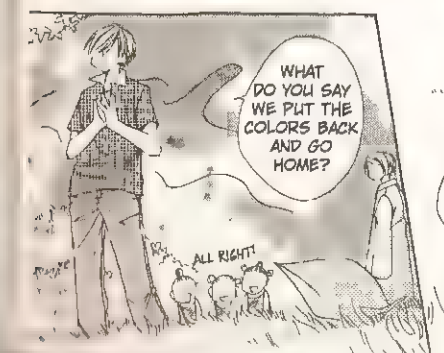

THAT WAS OVER TEN YEARS AGO.
ANCIENT HISTORY. I'M FINE NOW.
SO FORGET THAT BUSINESS. DON'T YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT SNOW LOOKS LIKE WHEN IT'S COVERING THE GROUND?
No!
IT WASN'T BORING AT ALL!! OR EXCITING! IT, UM...
I TOLD YOU IT WAS BORING...
tch!
NOT AT ALL...
I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED...
...I'M SORRY DOCTOR.



ALL RIGHT.
THE MEMORY OF ALL OF US, SHUT UP IN THE HOUSE TOGETHER, IS WHAT MAKES THAT SNOW SPECIAL.
...THE ONLY BEAUTIFUL SNOW THAT I CAN SEE IS FROM THE TIME WE WERE SNOWBOUND.
HE'S MOSTLY FINE NOW ...
...BUT PART OF HIM ISN'T.
IT'S SPECIAL ...
... BECAUSE I CAN NEVER GET IT BACK AGAIN.
SLAP!
I'M READY!
THEN LET IT SNOW!!!

WHA... ?!
ME?!
PAINT THIS WHOLE STRETCH HERE, EVERYTHING YOU SEE.
IT DOESN'T INVOLVE ANY DETAIL WORK, SO IT SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM FOR YOU.
JUST MAKE EVERYTHING WHITE.
.....
WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES...
...BUT I JUST CAN'T LOOK AT SNOW NOW AND THINK IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
I'M FINE TALKING ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED ...
TO BE HONEST, IT'S HARD FOR ME TO FULFILL THEIR EXPECTATIONS ...
...ABOUT SNOW...
...SO I'M SORRY, BUT...I WANT YOU TO DO IT FOR ME.


KYAAA!
KYAAA!


WHAT DO YOU SAY WE PUT THE COLORS BACK AND GO HOME?
ALL RIGHT!

OKAY.

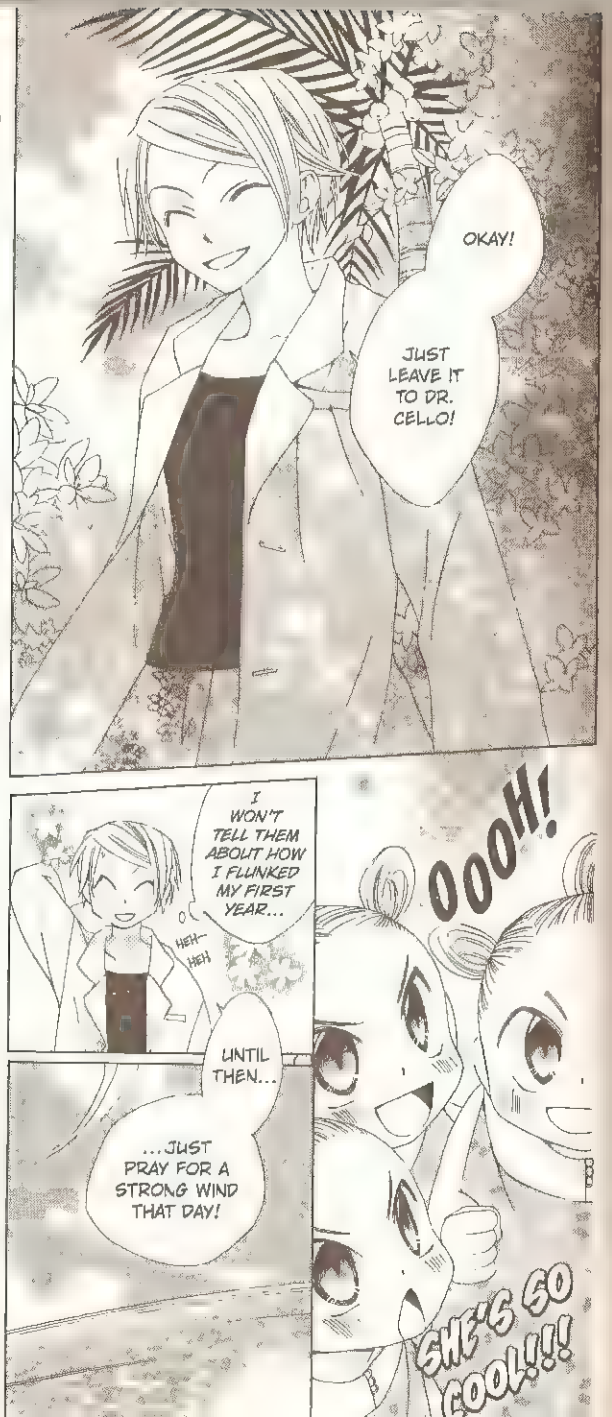
SSS...
WOW...
I GUESS THIS IS CLOSE ENOUGH...

8

SPEAKING OF THE SCHOOL INFIRMARY...

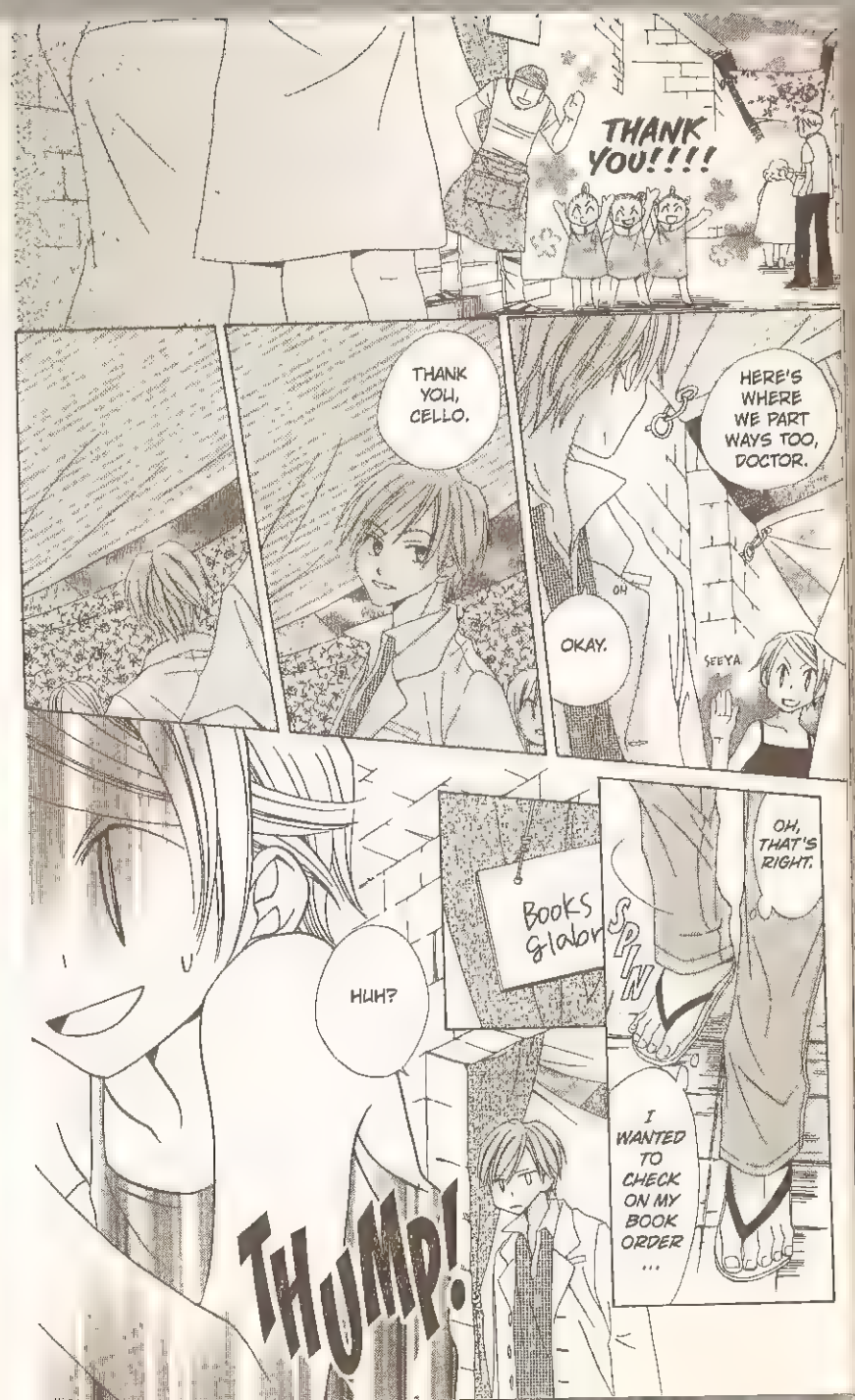
EVEN WHEN BADLY NEEDED, I NEVER WENT THERE. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN I WAS IN FOURTH GRADE AND FELL OFF THE VAULTING HORSE (AND WAS DIAGNOSED WITH A BROKEN ARM THREE DAYS LATER), I DIDN'T GO. NOR DID I IN MY SECOND YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL, WHEN I GOT FOOD POISONING (DUE TO MOLD ON A SWEET BUN I BROUGHT TO SCHOOL FOR LUNCH). SO THE ONLY IMAGE MY MIND CONJURES UP WHEN I TRY TO IMAGINE THE INFIRMARY IS A ROOM THAT HAS EXTRA TOILET PAPER ON STANDBY. FOR THE INFIRMARY IN THIS STORY, I'VE TRIED TO PUT LOVE AND HOPE INTO MY DEPICTION OF THE SCHOOL INFIRMARY, TO FILL IT UP WITH MUCH MORE THAN JUST T.P.

SEE YOU AT THE END OF THE VOLUME!

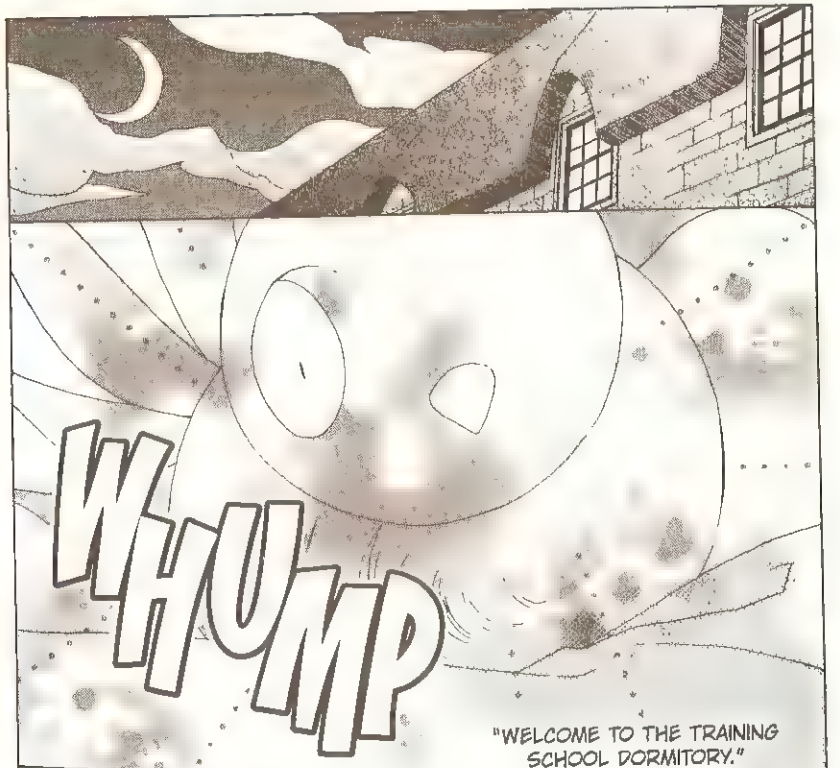

OKAY!
JUST LEAVE IT TO DR. CELLO!
I WON'T TELL THEM ABOUT HOW I FLUNKED MY FIRST YEAR...
HEH-HEH
UNTIL THEN...
...JUST PRAY FOR A STRONG WIND THAT DAY!
OOOH!
SHE'S SO COOL!!!

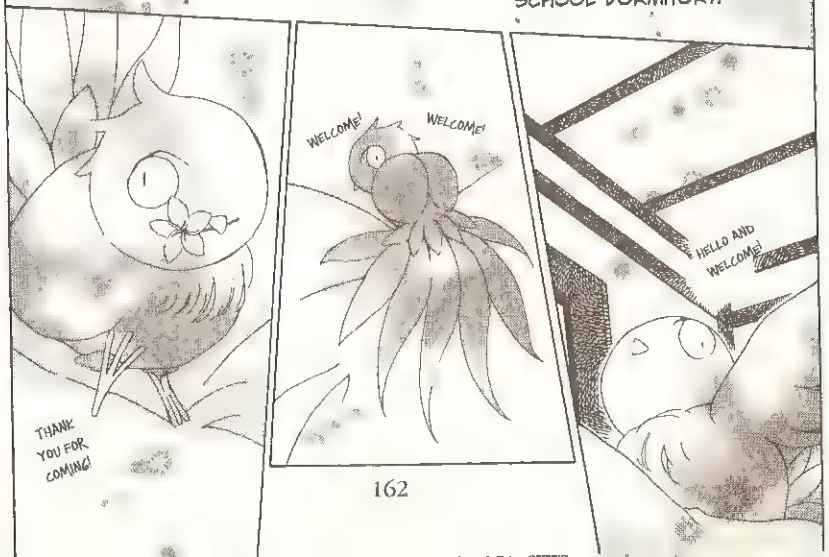
NOW WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?
I'D LOVE TO HAVE A BIRTHDAY LIKE THAT!
UM...
CAN WE ASK YOU A FAVOR?
WHAT IS IT?
EH?!
THUMP
THUMP
DR. CELLO...
RIGHT?
OUR BIRTHDAY IS NEXT WEEK.
CAN YOU MAKE IT SNOW LIKE THIS THAT DAY, BUT HAVE IT FALL FROM THE SKY?
HMM...

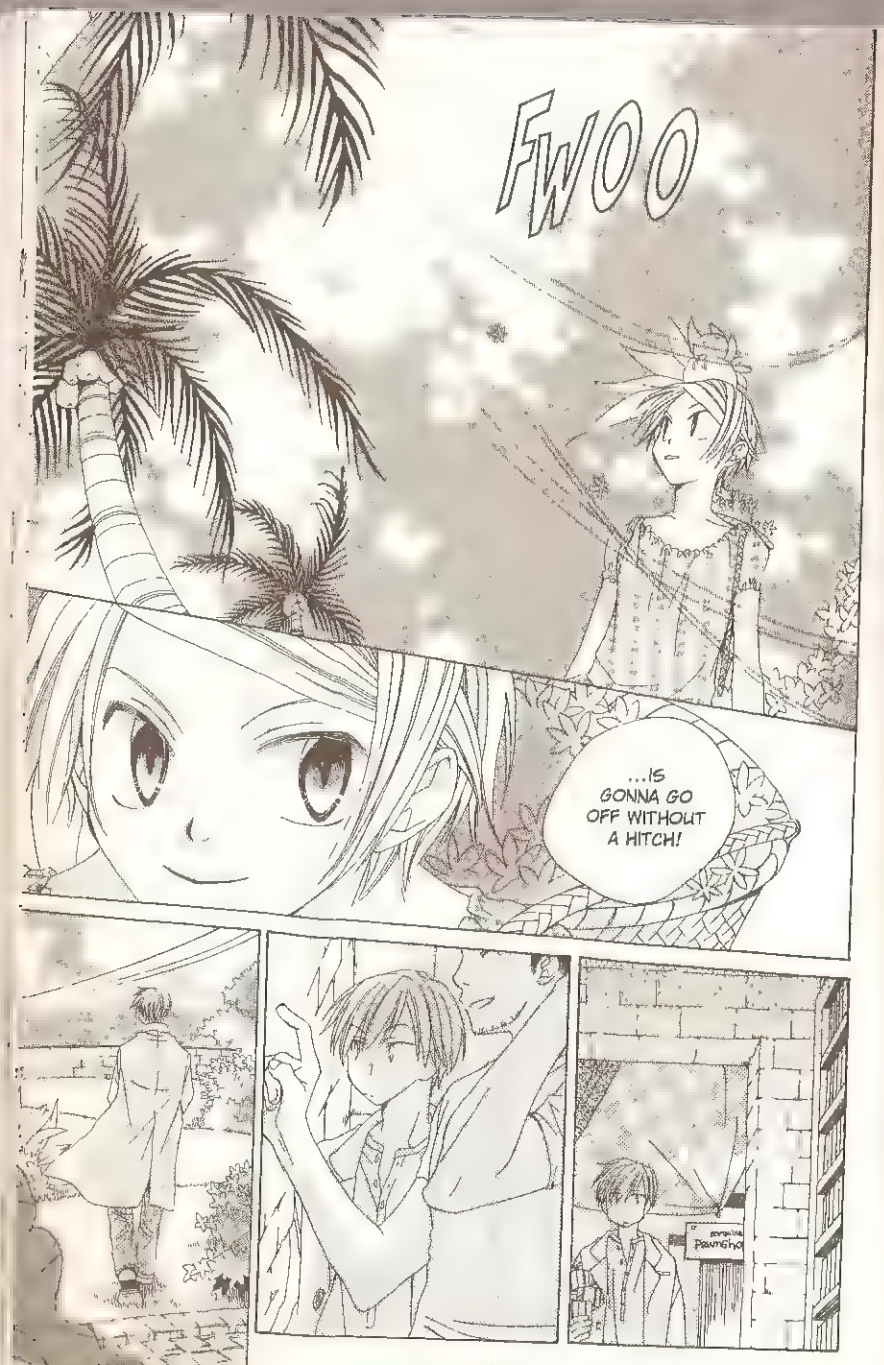
REMEMBER, CELLO. YOU KNOW YOU'RE AN ADULT WHEN YOU CAN BUY IT WITHOUT SNEAKING AROUND.
AH, I HAD A QUESTION ABOUT MY ORDER.
EXACTLY WHAT DO YOU THINK I'M HERE FOR...?
NOTHING, REALLY.
I JUST HAD TO, UH...
NEVER MIND, WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?
SWISH
DOCTOR...
WHAT'D YOU COME BACK FOR?
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE GETTING NAUGHTY BOOKS.
I'VE GOT NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE BEING SO SECRETIVE ABOUT...

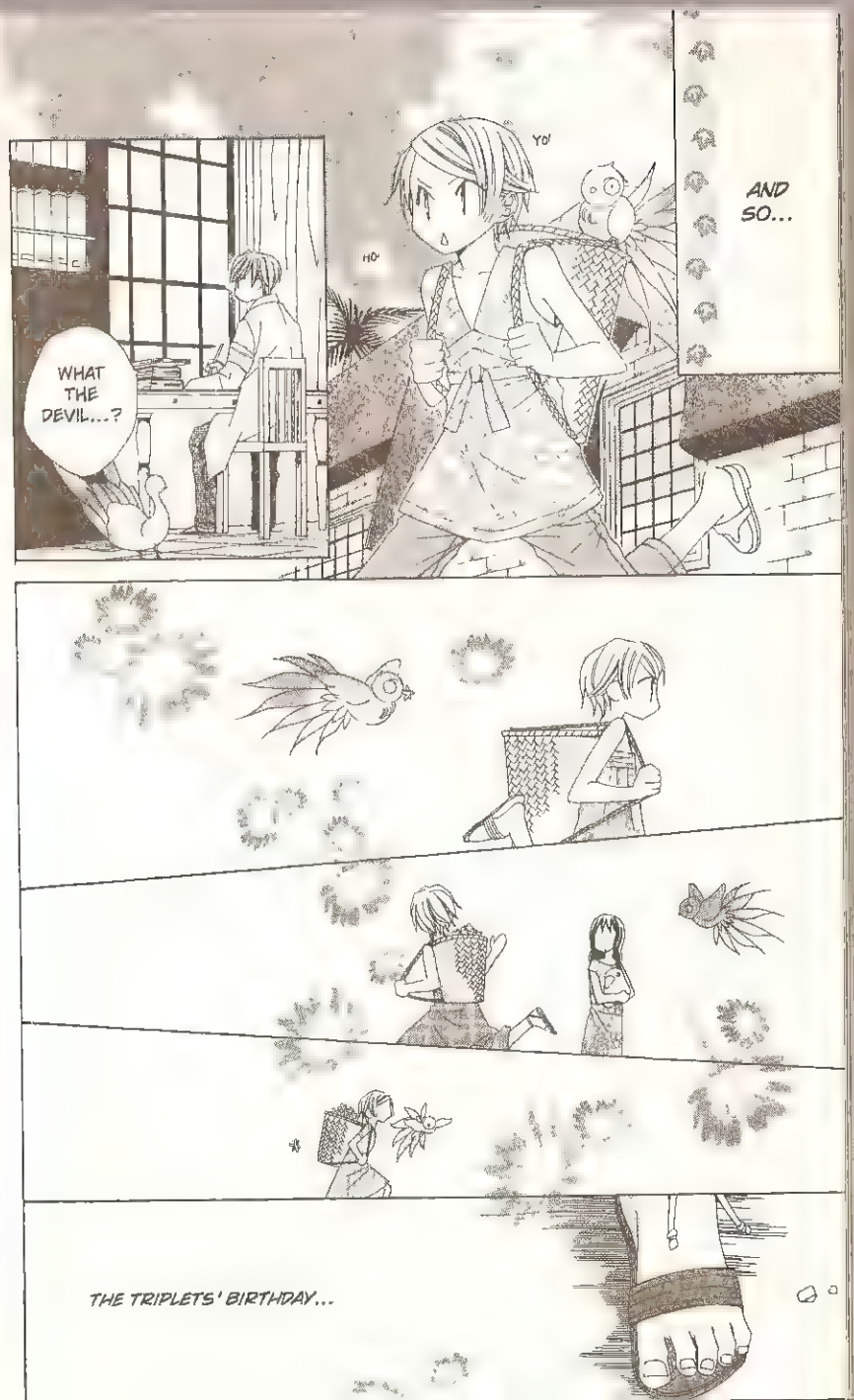

THANK YOU!!!!
THANK YOU, CELLO.
HERE'S WHERE WE PART WAYS TOO, DOCTOR.
OH
OKAY.
SEEYA
Books Glalor
SPIN
OH, THAT'S RIGHT.
HUH?
I WANTED TO CHECK ON MY BOOK ORDER...
THUMP!

YOYO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WHAT, YOU WANTED MORE TIME IN THE SPOT-LIGHT...?
FWAP
FWAP
OUCH!
PAT
A SNOW SCENE POSTCARD.
I BOUGHT IT ON THE WAY HOME.
LET'S KEEP THIS A SECRET FROM DR. GUELL...
...AND STILL GET IT TO LOOK LIKE THE REAL THING.
GRIN


WHUMP
"WELCOME TO THE TRAINING SCHOOL DORMITORY."


THANK YOU FOR COMING!
WELCOME!
WELCOME!
HELLO AND WELCOME!


FWOO
...IS GONNA GO OFF WITHOUT A HITCH!

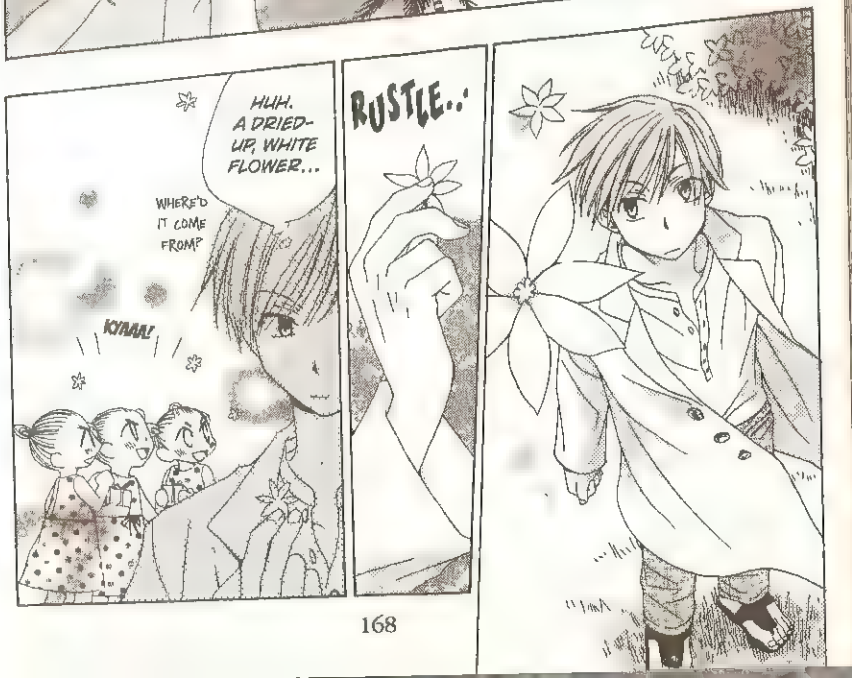

YO!
HO!
WHAT THE DEVIL...?
AND SO...
THE TRIPLETS' BIRTHDAY...

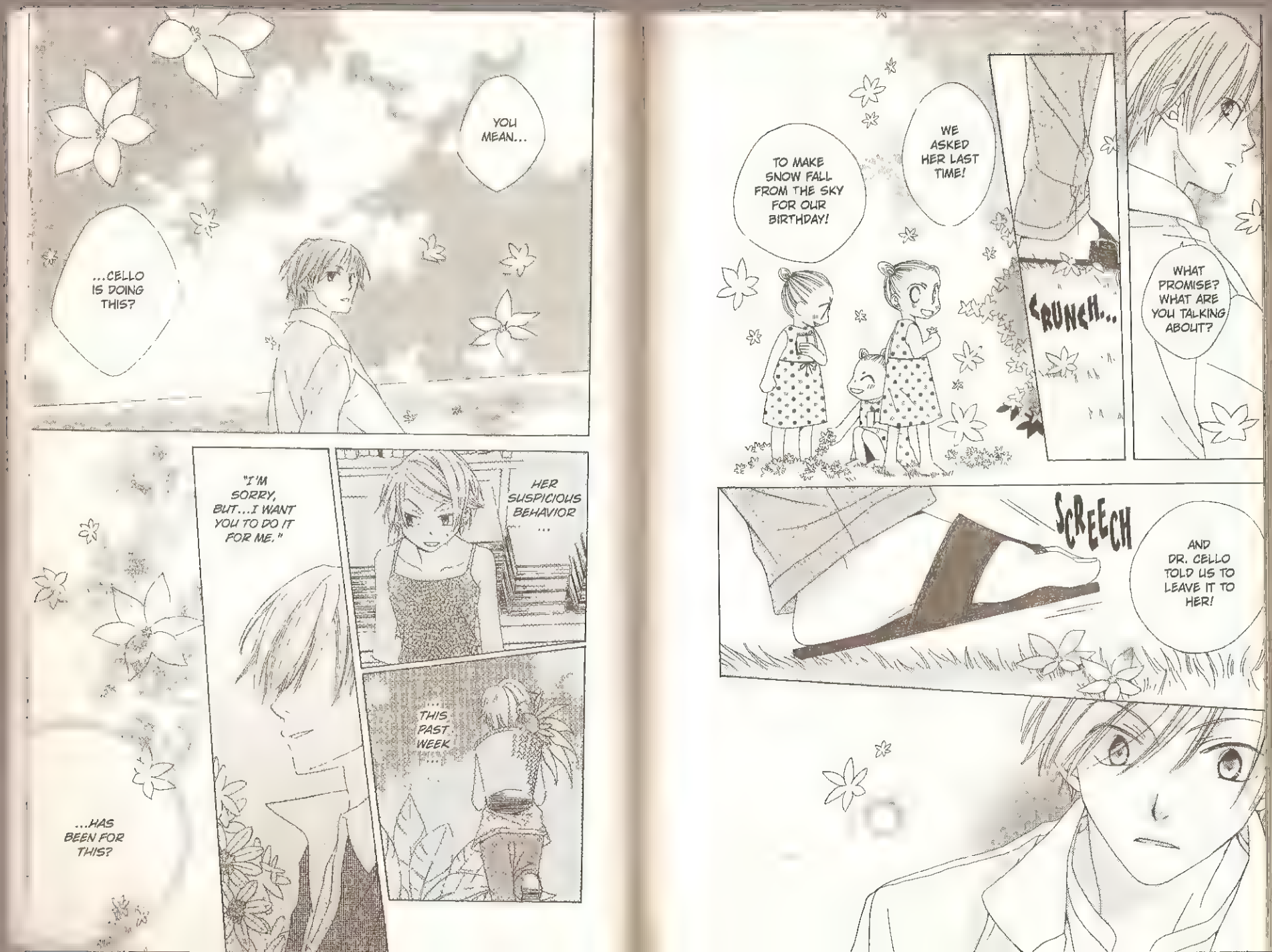
SHAKE
REALLY?
ARE YOU SURE YOU WEREN'T FOLLOWED BY SECURITY?
GOOD!
THEN I CAN PUT OFF GETTING YELLED AT 'TIL LATER!
YOYO!
FLUTTER...

DR. GUELL!!!
MILLIO, BILLIO, TRILLIO!
OH!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
YAYYY! THANK YOU!
SURE IS WINDY TODAY...
GRIN
YUP!
WHOOPS!
ALMOST GOT BLOWN AWAY
WOO

FOR ME...
...BEAUTIFUL SNOW WILL NEVER FALL AGAIN.
SNOW!!!
CRUNCH
I'M A LITTLE ENVIOUS OF THEM.

WHEEE!
LOOK AT ALL THE SNOW!
JUST LIKE SHE PROMISED!
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WISH FOR IT...


HUH. A DRIED-UP, WHITE FLOWER...
WHERE'D IT COME FROM?
KYAAA!
RUSTLE..


...CELLO IS DOING THIS?
YOU MEAN...
...HAS BEEN FOR THIS?
...THIS PAST WEEK...
HER SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR...
"I'M SORRY, BUT...I WANT YOU TO DO IT FOR ME."
TO MAKE SNOW FALL FROM THE SKY FOR OUR BIRTHDAY!
WE ASKED HER LAST TIME!
CRUNCH...
WHAT PROMISE? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
SCREECH
AND DR. CELLO TOLD US TO LEAVE IT TO HER!

ISN'T THE SNOW BEAUTIFUL, DR. GUELL?

SHE'S DOING IT ALONE...
...TO SPARE MY FEELINGS.
NOW THAT I LOOK CLOSER, I SEE ALL THE FLOWERS SHE CHOSE HAVE SIX PETALS.
HUH. SHE REALLY PAID ATTENTION TO DETAILS.
DID CELLO TELL YOU ANYTHING ELSE?
JUST TO "PRAY FOR WIND."
RIGHT?
YEP!
INDEED... AND DO YOU KNOW WHERE SHE IS?
AT THE ISLAND'S HIGHEST POINT!
"...LIKE HEIGHTS."
"IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN'T STAND?"
"I DON'T ..."
CELLO...

FWOOO
ACK!
TOT
TER
GRAB
CELLO!
I'M GONNA FAL...

YES, IT IS, ISN'T IT?
FWOO
I HOPE IT'S REACHING THEM...
AH!
RATTLE
WAIT...

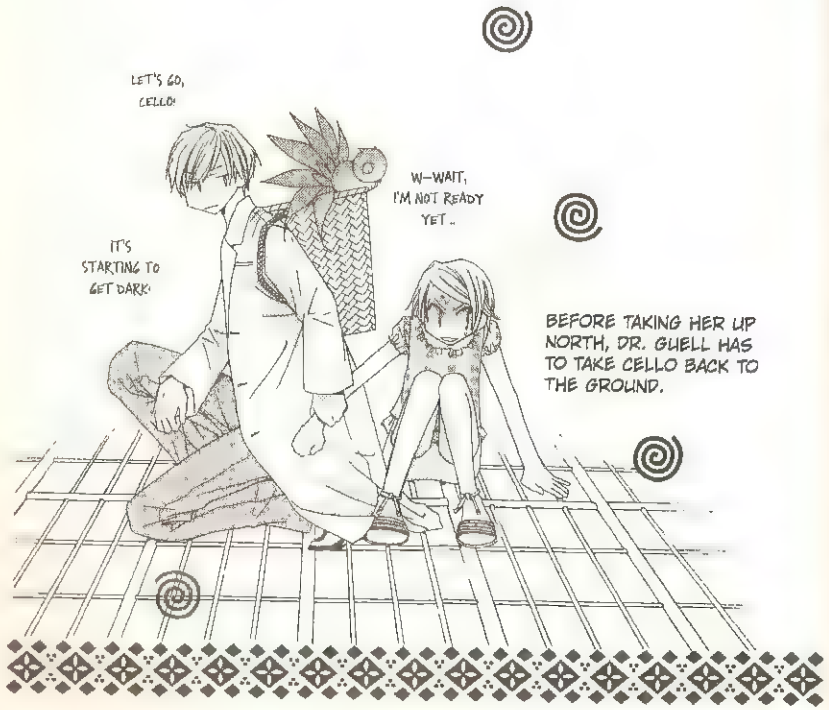
"CHATTER CHATTER"?!
YOYO, INTERPRET, PLEASE!
I CAN'T!
CHATTER CHATTER
CHATTER CHATTER
UWAAA...
...CELLO?
OOF!
DR. GUELL.
THAT'S...

CRASH!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT...

...LIKE THE BELOVED, BEAUTIFUL SNOW...
...OF MY YOUTH IN THE TUNDRA.
I'LL NEVER GET THAT BACK. BUT STILL...
EH? BUT...
HUH? I THOUGHT YOU COULD NEVER THINK THAT WAY AGAIN ABOUT...
IT COULD NEVER BE...
I WANT TO SEE...
...A LITTLE MORE OF THIS SNOW MYSELF.
IT WAS BEAUTIFUL.
OH...
SO, DID YOU MEET THE TRIPLETS?
THEY WERE VERY PLEASED.
GOOD.
DID IT LOOK LIKE REAL SNOW WAS FALLING?
YES.

ONE DAY, I'LL TAKE YOU...
...UP NORTH... TO MY HOME COUNTRY.
EH?!
...SEEING WARM SNOW FALL FROM OUT OF THE BLUE...

I'M STILL A LITTLE SHAKY ...
OH, WELL
FSS...
COPYCAT
CRUNCH
YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO SEE SNOW TOO, RIGHT?
UH-HUH.

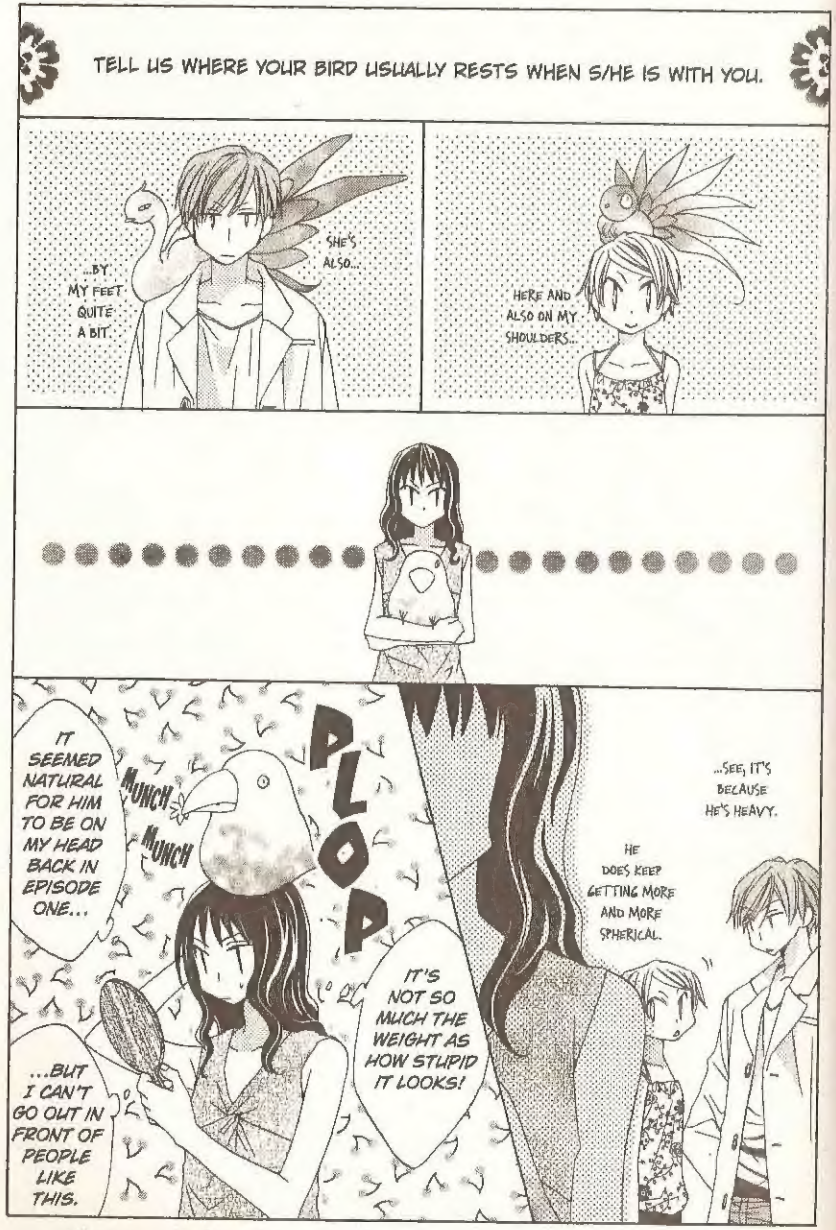

LET'S GO, CELLO!
W-WAIT, I'M NOT READY YET..
IT'S STARTING TO GET DARK!
BEFORE TAKING HER UP NORTH, DR. GUELL HAS TO TAKE CELLO BACK TO THE GROUND.

AS THANKS FOR TODAY.

...MADE ME FEEL LIKE TRACKS...

...WERE BEING DRAWN LIGHTLY ACROSS MY HEART, TICKLING ME.

EPISODE 3: THE END


TELL US WHERE YOUR BIRD USUALLY RESTS WHEN S/HE IS WITH YOU.
...BY MY FEET QUITE A BIT.
SHE'S ALSO...
HERE AND ALSO ON MY SHOULDERS...
IT SEEMED NATURAL FOR HIM TO BE ON MY HEAD BACK IN EPISODE ONE...
MUNCH MUNCH
PLOP
...BUT I CAN'T GO OUT IN FRONT OF PEOPLE LIKE THIS.
IT'S NOT SO MUCH THE WEIGHT AS HOW STUPID IT LOOKS!
HE DOES KEEP GETTING MORE AND MORE SPHERICAL.
...SEE, IT'S BECAUSE HE'S HEAVY.

The more I draw these birds, the rounder they get.

I wonder if it was a good idea to draw a half-naked man here...

NO.
DATE 2003-2004

KUSAKAWA NOTES

ABOUT NAMES

IN OPAL, PEOPLE DON'T HAVE LAST NAMES. I THOUGHT IT JUST SOMEHOW SEEMED MORE CASUAL THAT WAY. HOWEVER, DR. GUELL, WHOSE HOMETOWN IS OFF THE ISLAND, DOES HAVE A FIRST NAME. HIS FULL NAME IS "LEXELL GUELL."

I GOT THE NAME OF THE ISLAND, OPAL, FROM THE JEWEL, OF COURSE. I THINK IT WAS A GOOD CHOICE BECAUSE MANY SPARKLING COLORS CAN BE SEEN WITHIN OPALS. I SAW A WHITE OPAL, NOT THE REAL THING, BUT IN A PICTURE BOOK, AND THOUGHT, "WOW!" MY MIND WAS SET AFTER SEEING IT.

FOR THE PALETTE CHARACTERS, I BORROWED PRE-EXISTING WORDS OR NAMES OF PEOPLE TO USE AS THEIR NAMES WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS. THE ONLY CHARACTER WITH A NAME THAT HAS NO DISCERNIBLE ORIGIN IS "KECHONPA". I CHRISTENED THE BOOKSTORE TRIPLETS "MILLION", "BILLION" AND "TRILLION". I LIKE THE RING TO IT AND THAT'S WHY THE GIRLS' FATHER CHOSE THE NAMES, NOT OUT OF A WISH FOR THAT KIND OF MONEY.

THIS IS NOTHING SPECIAL FOR THE DOCTOR. HE'S ALWAYS DOUBLY DAZED RIGHT AFTER HE WAKES UP.

Olga is a girl. Yoyo and Kechonpa are boys.

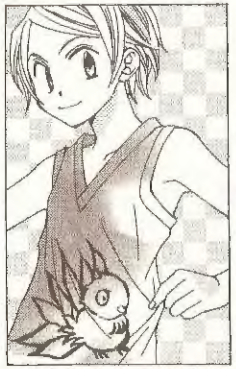
I HUMBLY APOLOGIZE FOR NOT HAVING THE TIME TO SEND RESPONSES, BUT IF YOU HAVE AN OPINION, ETC., ABOUT THIS SERIES, PLEASE WRITE TO:

NARI KUSAKAWA
C/O CMX
888 PROSPECT
STREET, SUITE 240
LA JOLLA, CA 92037

MUCH APPRECIATION GOES OUT TO YOU, WHO READ THIS; TO MY EDITOR AND EVERYONE WHO'S LET ME PUBLISH/SELL MY STORIES; TO MY FAMILY, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS; TO THE OWNER OF THE LIQUOR STORE, WHO LET ME MAKE COPIES THERE; AND TO EVERYONE WHO'S GIVEN ME A HAND IN PRODUCING THIS. THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH!

2004.08.

ABOUT THE STORIES



EPISODE 1

JUST A LITTLE OVER A YEAR ELAPSED BETWEEN COMPLETING EPISODE ONE AND EPISODE THREE, AND I THOUGHT THE ART TOOK A TURN FOR THE REALISTIC AS THE EPISODES WENT BY. BUT NOW, LOOKING BACK, I CAN SEE IT REALLY DIDN'T CHANGE ALL THAT MUCH. THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE IS THAT DR.GUELL, WHO STARTS LOOKING LIKE A BOY, BUT THEN MATURES INTO A YOUNG MAN. AT THE TIME OF EPISODE ONE, CELLO IS 16 AND THE DOCTOR IS 23. THIS WAS THE FIRST EVER "COVER STORY" IN A MAGAZINE.

EPISODE 2

THIS WAS AND CURRENTLY IS THE LONGEST STORY I'VE EVER DONE. IT CLOCKS IN AT 80 PAGES. LONG...! MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I GRIPPED MY PENCIL THE WRONG WAY, BUT MY HAND HURT WHILE WORKING ON THIS ONE. I WANT TO CORRECT THE WAY I HOLD A PENCIL. (I SAY THAT, BUT DOUBT I'LL DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT...) THE OWNER OF HIS TRADING COMPANY, GOSHEN, IS SUCH A VILLAIN THAT IT'S LIKE, WHO CARES WHAT HIS OCCUPATION IS? HE'S A BAD GUY! IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY IN THE STORY, MAYBE YOU CAN MAKE OUT THE CIRCLE OF A WEDDING BAND ON HIS FINGER?

EPISODE 3

I FINALLY GOT TO A STORY THAT TOUCHES ON THE CHARACTERS' FEELINGS. HEH HEH. I LOVE SNOW. WHEN I WENT TO RESEARCH OCTOPI SO I COULD DRAW A DECENT ONE IN THE STORY, I FOUND OUT THAT IF THEY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO EAT, OCTOPI WILL EAT THEIR OWN ARMS. WHEW, KINDA NASTY EMERGENCY PROVISIONS...ALTHOUGH IT'S NO BIG DEAL SINCE THEY'VE GOT THE REGENERATIVE ABILITY TO GROW THE ARM BACK. I SAY THAT'S UNFAIR!

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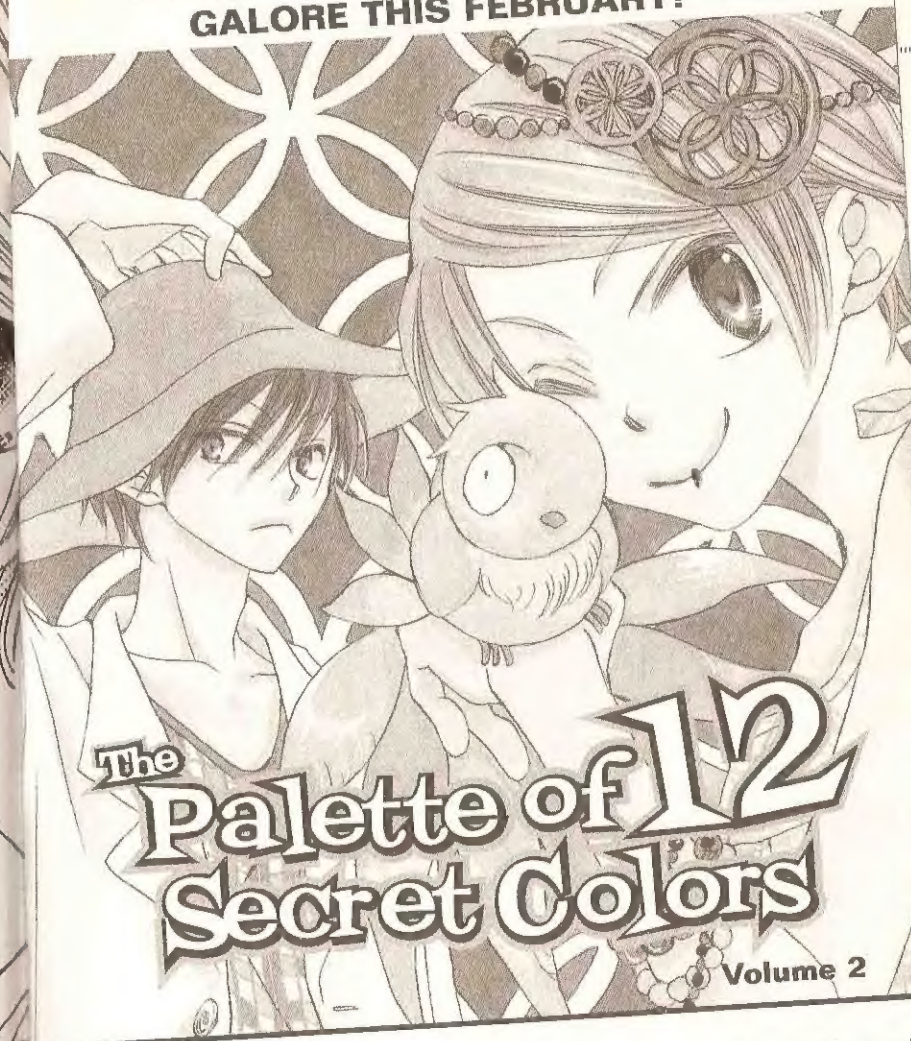
DECK THE HALLS WITH COLORS GALORE THIS FEBRUARY!



The Palette of 12 Secret Colors

Volume 2

By Nari Kusakawa. It's Christmas time on the island of Opal, and a visiting young Prince introduces holiday traditions to its residents. What could be more festive than the powers of the color wizards unleashed upon the season? But Dr. Guell is jealous of the relationship between the Prince and Cello and adds a sour note to the happy celebration. Then, find out more about Cello's family and learn how she first bonded with Yoyo, her very special bird.

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